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IN FIFTY VOLUMES.

By *JOHN WESLEY*, M. A.
Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

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FROM THE
COLLECTION OF

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CHOICEST PIECES



ENGLISH TONGUE

FOR

IN FIRST VOLUME

JOHN W. L. L. L. L.

THE

VOL. XXV

BY

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EXTRACTS

FROM THE

WORKS

OF

Dr. ROBT. LEIGHTON,

Sometime Archbishop of *Glasgow*,

CONTINUED.



SER.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

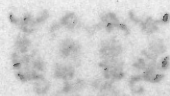
WORKS



DR. ROBERT H. KEYNES

Sometime Ambassador of Great Britain

CONTINUED

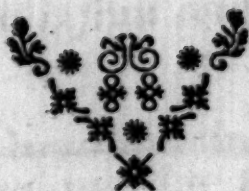


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SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions.



SERMONS

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Several Occasions.



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S E R M O N I.

JAMES iii. 17.

The Wisdom that is from above, is pure.

GOD doth know that in the Day that ye shall eat thereof your Eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil, was the first Hissing of that old Serpent, by which he poisoned Mankind in the Root. Man not contented with the Impression of God's Image in which he was created, lost it by catching at a Shadow; climbing higher than his Station, he fell far below it; seeking to be more than Man, to become as GOD, he made himself less than Man, he lodged not at Night in Honour, but became as the Beasts that perish; ever since Nature's best Wisdom is full of Impurity, Turbulency

lency, and Distemper: Nor can any Thing rectify it, but a *Wisdom from above*, that both cleanseth and composeth the Soul, *It is first pure, and then peaceable.*

THIS Epistle, as some that follow, is called, *General*, both by Reason of the Dispersion of the Parties to whom it is addressed, and the Universality of the Subject of which it treats: Containing a great Number (if not all) of the necessary Directions and Comforts of a Christian's Life, both from the active, and passive Part of it. It is evident that the Apostle's main Design is, to arm the dispersed *Jews* against all Kinds of Temptations, both those of Affliction, in the 1st Chap. at the 2d Verse, and sinful Temptations Verse 13. And having discoursed of two special Means of strengthening them against both, speaking to GOD in Prayer, and hearing GOD speak in his Word, in the two last Verses of that Chap. he recommends, as chief Duties of Religion, and sure Evidences of Integrity in Religion, first Meekness and Moderation, chiefly in their Speeches, and then Charity, and Purity in their Actions; insisting largely upon the latter, in the 2d Chapter, and upon the former, the ruling of the Tongue, in this 3d Chapter; and here towards the End of it he shews the true Spring of Miscarriage in Speech and Action, and of right ordering and regulating of both; Evil Conversation, Strifes, and Envyings, are the Fruits of a base Wisdom that is *Earthly, Sensual, and Devilish*, Verse 15. But *Purity, Meekness, and Mercy*, are the proper Effects, and certain Signs of Heavenly Wisdom.

THE *Wisdom that is from above*, is first pure: Its Gentleness can agree with any Thing except Impurity; then it is peaceable, it offends no Body,
except

except Purity offend them: It is not raging and boisterous; *It is not only pure, being void of that Mire and Dirt, which the Wicked are said to cast out like the Sea, Isa. lvii. 20.* But peaceable likewise, not swelling, and restless like the Sea as is there said of the Wicked; nor is it only peaceable negatively, not offending, but as the Word bears εἰρημὴν pacifick, disposed to make, and seek Peace, and as it readily offends none, so it is not easily offended; it is gentle and moderate, ἡμεῖς and if offended ὑπομένει easily entreated to forgive; and as it easily passeth by Mens Offences, so it doth not put by, but looks on their Distresses, and Wants; as full of Compassion, as it is free from unruly and distempered Passions, nor rests it in an affecting Sympathy, its Mercy is helpful, *full of Mercy, and good Fruits.* It both forgives, and pities, and gives without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy [ἀδύλακτον καὶ ἀνυπόκριτον] The Word may as well bear another Sense, no less suiting both with this Wisdom, and these its other Qualities: That is, not taking upon it a censorious Discerning and Judging of others: They that have most of this Wisdom, are least rigid to those that have less of it; I know no better Evidence of Strength in Grace, then to bear much with those that are weak in it. And lastly, as it spares the Infirmities of others, so it makes not false and vain Shews of its own Excellencies, *It is without Hypocrisy.* This denies two Things, both Dissimulation and Ostentation; the Art of Dissembling, is no Part of this Wisdom; and for the other, Ostentation, surely the Air of Applause is too light a Purchase for solid Wisdom. The Works of this Wisdom may be seen, yea they should be seen, and may possibly be now and then commended; but they should not be done for that low End, either to be seen or to be commended; surely

surely no, the Wisdom being of so noble Extraction, having descended from Heaven, will be little careful for the Estimation of those that are of the Earth, and are but too often of the Earth, earthly.

THE Subject, *Wisdom from above*, requires our first Consideration; next the excellent Quality that is attributed to it.

Wisdom from above] THERE are two Things in that: There is the general Term of Wisdom common to diverse Sorts of Wisdom, though most eminently, and truly belonging to this. Then there is the Original of this Wisdom, serving as its Difference to distinguish it from all the rest, *Wisdom from above*. Wisdom, in the general, is a very plausible Word among Men; who is there that would not willingly pass for wise? Yea often those that are least of all such, are most desirous to be accounted such, and where this fails them, they usually make up that Want in their own Conceit, and strong Opinion. Nor do Men only thus love the Reputation of Wisdom, but they naturally desire to be wise, as they do to be happy; yet through corrupt Nature's Blindness, they do as naturally mistake and fall short both of the one and the other, and being once wrong, the more Progress they make, they are further out of the Way. And pretending to Wisdom in a false Way, they still befool themselves, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. i. 22. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

OUR Apostle, Ver. 15. speaking of that wicked Wisdom, that is fruitful of Wrongs, Strifes, and Debates, and that is only abusively to be called Wisdom, shews what Kind of Wisdom it is, by

three

three notable Characters, *Earthly, Natural, and Devilish*, which though they be here jointly attributed to one and the same Subject, yet we may make Use of them to signify some Differences of false Wisdom. There is an Infernal, or Devilish Wisdom, proper for contriving Cruelties, and Oppressions, or subtil Shifts, and Deceits, that make Atheism a main Basis and Pillar of State Policy; *Such are those that devise Mischief upon their Beds, Mich. ii.* This is Serpentine Wisdom, not joined with, but most opposite to the Dove-like Simplicity. There is an Earthly Wisdom that draws not so deep in Impiety, as that other, yet is sufficient to keep a Man out of all Acquaintance with GOD, and drawing his Eye perpetually downwards, employing him in the Pursuit of such Things as cannot fill the Soul, except it be with Anguish and Vexation. That Dexterity of gathering Riches, where it is not attended with the Christian Art of right using them, abases Mens Souls, and indisposes them wholly for this *Wisdom that is from above.* There is a natural Wisdom far more plausible than the other two, more harmless than that hellish Wisdom, and more refined than that earthly Wisdom, yet no more able to make Man holy. and happy than they; *Natural*, it is the Word the Apostle St. Paul useth, 1 Cor. ii. *αὐτοὺς ψυχῶν*, naming the natural Man by his better Part, his Soul; intimating that the Soul, even in the highest Faculty of it, the Understanding, and that in the highest Pitch of Excellency to which Nature can raise it, is blind in spiritual Objects; Things that are above it, cannot be known but by a *Wisdom from above.* Nature neither affords this Wisdom, nor can of itself acquire it. This is to advertise us, that we mistake not Morality and common Knowledge even of Divine Things, for *the Wisdom that is from above.* This may raise a Man high

high above the Vulgar, as the Tops of the highest Mountains leave the Valleys below them; yet is it still as far short of true supernatural Wisdom, as the highest Earth is of the highest Sphere. There is one main Point of the Method of this Wisdom that is of most hard Digestion to a natural Man, and the more naturally wise he be, the worse he likes it, *If any Man would be Wise, let him become a Fool that he may become Wise*, 1 Cor. iii. 18. There is nothing gives Nature a greater Prejudice against Religion than this initial Point of Self-denial: When Men of eminent Learning, or the strong Politicians, hear, *that if they will come to Christ, they must renounce their own Wisdom to be fit for his*, many of them go away as sorrowful as the young Man, when he heard of selling all his Goods and giving them to the Poor.

JESUS CHRIST is that eternal and substantial Wisdom that came from above, to deliver Men from perishing in their effected Folly. St. Paul calls Him *the Wisdom of GOD*. That shews his Excellency in Himself, and he tells us that *He is made of GOD our Wisdom*. That shews his Usefulness to us. And by Him alone is this infused Wisdom from above, conveyed to us; *In Him are hid the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*, Col. ii. 3. *And from his Fulness* (if at all) *we all receive Grace for Grace*; and of all Graces, first some Measures of this Wisdom, without which no Man can know himself, much less can he know GOD. Now this supernatural Wisdom hath in it both Speculation and Prudence. It is contemplative, and practical. These two must not be separated, *I Wisdom dwell with Prudence*, Prov. viii. 12. This Wisdom in its contemplative Part reads *Christ* much, and discovers in Him a new World of hidden Excellencies unknown to this old World. But they

they are hid, and no Eye sees them, but that which is enlightened with this Wisdom: But when the renewed Understanding of a Christian is once initiated into this Study, it both grows daily more and more apprehensive, and *Christ* becomes more communicative of Himself, and makes the Soul acquainted with the amiable Countenance of his Father in Him reconciled. *No Man hath seen GOD at any Time, the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him,* John. i. 18. What Wonder if the unlettered and despised Christian know more of the Mysteries of Heaven, than the Naturalist, though both wise and learned? *Christ* admits the Believer into his Bosom, and He is in the Bosom of the Father. But withal know, that all this Knowledge though speculatively high, yet descends to Practice; as it learns what GOD is, so it thence teacheth Man, what he should be: This Wisdom flows from Heaven, and a Heavenly Conversation flows from it, as we find it here Charactered by these practical Graces of Purity, Peace, Meekness.

THIS Wisdom represents to us, the Purity of GOD's Nature. It gives the Soul an Eye to see the Comeliness and Beauty of *Purity*, as the Philosopher said of Virtue, to the End it might be loved, he would wish no more but that it could be seen. And as it thus morally persuades, so by an insensible Virtue it assimilates the Soul to *Christ*: It also produces all the Motives to Holiness, and Obedience; it begets these precious Qualities in the Soul, it giveth a Christian a View of the matchless Virtues that are in *Christ*, and stirs him up to a diligent, though imperfect Imitation of them; it sets before us *Christ's* spotless Purity, in whose Mouth there was no Guile, and so invites us to Purity; it represents the perpetual Calmness of

his Spirit, that no Tempest could reach to disturb it; in his Mouth there was no contentious Noise, his Voice was not heard in the Streets, and this recommends Peaceableness, and Gentleness, and so in the rest here mentioned.

HENCE I conceive it is evident, that gross Ignorance cannot consist with the Truth of Religion, much less can it be a Help and Advantage to it. I shall never deny that a false superstitious Religion stands in Need of it; not too much Scripture Wisdom for the People: The Pomp of that vain Religion, like Court Masks, shews best by Candle-light: Fond Nature likes it well; the Day of spiritual Wisdom would discover its Imposture too clearly. But to let their soul Devotion pass, (for such it must needs be, that is born of so black a Mother as Ignorance) let this Wisdom at least be justified of these that pretend to be her Children. It is lamentable that amongst us, where Knowledge is not withheld, Men should through Sloth and Love of Darkeness, deprive themselves of it. What Abundance of almost brutish Ignorance is amongst the People? And thence Uncleanliness, and all Manner of Wickedness; a Darkeness that both hides and increaseth Impurity: What is the Reason of so much Impiety, and Iniquity in all Places; but the Want of the Knowledge of God? And 2 *Thes.* i. 8. Not knowing *Jesus Christ*, and not obeying his Gospel are joined together. It will be found true, that where there is no Obedience, there is no right Knowledge of *Christ*: But out of all Question where there is not a Competency of Knowledge, there can be no Obedience; and as these two lodge together, so observe what attends them both. *He shall come in flaming Fire to render Vengeance on them that know not God,*
and

and that obey not the Gospel of our LORD JESUS Christ.

AND if there be any that think to shroud unpunished amongst the Thickets of Ignorance, even amidst the Means of Knowledge, take Notice of this, though it may hide the Deformity of Sin from your own Sight for a Time, it cannot palliate it from the piercing Eye, nor cover it from the revenging Hand of Divine Justice. As you would escape then that Wrath to come, come to Wisdom's School, and how simple soever ye be as to this World, if ye would not perish with the World, learn to be wise unto Salvation.

AND truly it is mainly important for this Effect, That the Ministers of the Gospel, be active and dextrous in imparting this Wisdom to their People. If they would have their Conversation to be holy, and peaceable, and Fruitful. The most expedient Way is once to principle them well in the fundamentals of Religion; for therein is their great Defect. How can they walk evenly and regularly so long as they are in the Dark; one main Thing is to be often pointing at the Way to Christ, the Fountain of this Wisdom. Else you bid them be cloathed and cloath them not.

How needful then is it that Pastors themselves be Seers indeed, as the Prophets were called of old, not only faithful, but wise Dispensers, as our Saviour speaks, *Luke xii. 42. That they be διδακτικοί, able and apt to teach, 1 Tim. iii. 2.* Laudable is the Prudence, that tries much the Church's Store-houses, the Seminaries of Learning, but withal, it is not to be forgot, that as a due Furniture of Learning is very requisite for this Employment, so it is not sufficient. When one

is duly enriched that Way, there is yet one Thing wanting that grows not in Schools: Except this infused Wisdom from above season and sanctify all other Endowments, they remain common and unholy, and therefore unfit for the Sanctuary; amongst other weak Pretences to *Christ's* Favour in the last Day, this is one, *We have preached in thy Name*, yet says Christ, *I never knew you*; surely then, they knew not Him, and yet they preached Him. Cold and Lifeless, (though never so fine and well contrived) must those Discourses be, that are of an *unknown Christ*. Pastors are called Angels, and therefore though they use the secondary Helps of Knowledge, they are mainly to bring their Message from above, from the Fountain, the Head of this pure Wisdom.

Pure] IF it come from above it must needs be pure, being the Portrait of GOD's renewed Image in the Soul. By this Wisdom the Understanding is both resigned, and strengthened to entertain right Conceptions of GOD in his Nature, and Works. And this is primarily necessary, that the Mind be not infected with false Opinions in Religion; if the Spring-head be polluted, the Streams cannot be pure; it is more important than Men usually think, for a good Life. But that which I suppose is here chiefly intended is, that it is effectively and practically pure, *It purifies the Heart*, Act. xv. 9. said of faith (which in some Sense and Acceptation differs not much from this Wisdom) and consequently the Words, and Actions that flow from the Heart.

THIS Purity some render *Chastity*. The Wisdom from above is *chaste*, ἀγνή. The Word is indeed often so taken and includes that here, but it is too narrow a Sense. It is here an universal

ful Detestation of all Impurity, both of Flesh and Spirit. Pride, Self-love, Profaneness of Spirit and Irreligion, though they do not so properly pollute the Body as carnal Uncleanness; yet they do no less defile the Soul, and make it abominable in the Sight of God. Those Apostate Angels called *unclean Spirits*, are incapable of bodily Defilement (tho' they tempt Man to it) their own inherent Pollutions must need be spiritual, for they are Spirits. *Idolatry* in Scripture goes often under the Name of *Fornication* and *Adultery*, and indeed these Sins may mutually borrow and lend their Names the one to the other; *Idolatry* may well be called *Spiritual Unchastity*; and unchaste Love, *carnal Idolatry*; earthly Mindedness likewise is an Impurity of the Soul; in the Apostle's Phrase, Covetousness is *Idolatry*, and so a spiritual Pollution; yea it may well share with *Idolatry* in its borrowed Name, and be called *Adultery* too, for it misbestows the Soul's prime Affection upon the Creature, which by Right is God's peculiar.

THIS Purity that true Wisdom works, is contrary to all Pollution. We know then in some Measure what it is, it rests to enquire where it is, and there is the Difficulty; it is far easier to design in itself, then to find it among Men: *Who can say, I have made my Heart clean?* Prov. xx. 9. Look upon the greatest Part of Mankind, and you may know at first Sight, that Purity is not to be looked for among them, they suffer it not to come near them, much less to dwell with them and within them; they hate the very Semblance of it in others, and themselves delight in Intemperance and all Manner of Licentiousness, like foolish Children striving who shall go furthest into the Mire; these cannot say they have made clean their Hearts, for all their Words and Actions will belie them. If you come

to the mere Moralist, the *World's honest Man*, and ask him; it may be, he will tell you he hath cleansed his Heart, but believe him not. It will appear he is not cleansed, because he says he has done it himself, for (you know) there must be some other besides Man at this Work. Again, he rising no higher than Nature, hath none of this heavenly Wisdom in him, and therefore is without this Purity too. But if you chance to take Notice of some well skilled Hypocrite, every Thing you meet with makes you almost confident, that there is Purity; yet if he be strictly put to it, he may make some good Account of the Pains he hath taken to refine his Tongue and his publick Actions, but he dare not say he hath made clean his Heart, it troubles his Peace to be asked the Question: He never intended to banish Sin, but to retire it to the innermost and best Room, that so it might dwell unseen within him, and where then should it lodge but in his Heart? Yet possibly because what is outward is so fair, and Man cannot look deeper to contradict him, he may embolden himself, to say he is inwardly suitable to his Appearance. But there is a Day at Hand that shall to his endless Shame at once discover both his secret Impurity and his Impudence in denying it.

AFTER these, there follow a few despised and melancholly Persons (at least as to outward Appearance,) who are complaining of abundant Sinfulness? And sure, Purity cannot be expected in these who are so far from it, by their own Confession: Yet the Truth is, that such Purity, as is here below, will either be found to lodge among these, or no where. Be not deceived, think not that they who loath, and (as they can) fly from the Unholiness of the World, are therefore taken with the Conceit of their own Holiness, but as their perfect Purity

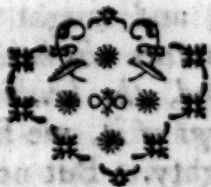
rity of Justification is by *Christ's* imputed Righteousness, so likewise they know, and acknowledge that their inherent Holiness is from above too, from the same Fountain *Jesus Christ*; the Wisdom from above is pure, this their Engagement to Heaven, for it excludes Boasting.

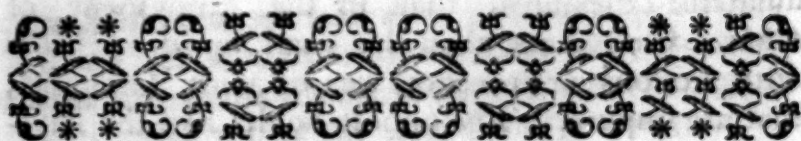
THE purified Christians are they that are most sensible of their Impurity. Therefore I called not this, an universal Freedom from Pollution, but an universal Detestation of it, they that are thus pure, cannot be in Love with any Sin at all, nor do they willingly dispence with the smallest Sins, which a natural Man either sees not to be Sin (though his dim Moon-light discovers grosser Evils) or if he do see them, yet he judges it too much Niceness to choose a great Inconvenience rather than a little Sin. Again, they differ in another Particular, a natural Man may be so far in Love with Virtue after his Manner, as to dislike his own Faults and resolve to amend them, but yet he would think it a great Weakness to sit down and mourn for Sin, *and to afflict his Soul*, as the Scripture speaks. The Christian's Repentance goes not so lightly, there is a great deal more Work in it, 2 *Cor.* vii. 11. There is not only Indignation against Impurity, but it proceeds to Revenge. The Saints we read of in Scripture were ashamed of their Impurity, but never of their Tears for it: Let the World enjoy their own Thoughts and account it Folly, yet sure the Christian, that delights in Purity, if he cannot yet be free from Sin, when he retires himself at Night, is then best contented when his Eyes serve him most plentifully to weep out the Stains of the by-past Day; yet he knows withal, that it is only his Redeemer's Blood that takes away the Guilt of them: This is the Condition of those that are truly, tho' not yet fully cleansed from the Pollutions of the World

World by the Spirit of Wisdom and Purity. What mean they then, that would argue themselves out of this Number, because they find yet much Dross left, and that they are not so refined as they would wish to be? On the contrary, this Hatred of Pollution testifies strongly that the contrary of it (Purity) is there; and though its Beginnings be small, doubt not, it shall in the End be victorious; the smoaking of this Flax shews indeed that there is gross Matter there, but it witnesseth likewise that there is Fire in it too. You find not indeed absolute Holiness in your Persons, nor in your best Performances, yet if you breath and follow after it, if the Pulse of the Heart beat thus, if the main Current of your Affection be towards Purity, if Sin be in you as your Disease and greatest Grief, and not as your Delight, then take Courage, you are in the Way. And notwithstanding that impure Spirit, *Satan*; and the Impurity of your own Spirits vex you daily, yet in Despite of them all, you shall arrive safe at the Harbour where you would be.

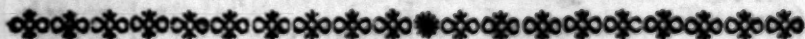
Wisdom from above is pure] BE ashamed then of your extream Folly, you that take Pleasure in any Kind of Uncleaness, especially seeing God hath reformed and purged his House amongst us; you that are, or should be his living Temples, remain not unreformed: If you do, Church-Reformation will be so far from profiting you, that as a clearer Light it will but serve to make your Impurity both more visible and more unexcusable: If you mean that the Holy Ghost should dwell with you, entertain Him, avoiding both spiritual and fleshly Pollutions. The Word here used doth more particularly signify Chastity, and certainly where-ever this *Wisdom from above* is, this comely Grace is one of her Attendants; whatever any have been in Times past, let all be persuaded henceforth to mortify all
lustful

lustful and carnal Affections; know that there is more true and lasting Pleasure in the Contempt of unlawful Pleasures, than in the Enjoyment of them. Grieve not then the good Spirit of GOD with Actions or Speeches, yea or with Thoughts, that are impure. The unholy Soul, like the Mystical *Babylon*, *Apoc.* xviii. makes itself a Cage of unclean Birds, and an Habitation of filthy Spirits, and if it continues to be such it must, when it dislodges, take up its Habitation with cursed Spirits for ever in utter Darkness. But as for those that are sincerely and affectionately pure, that is, *pure in Heart*, our Saviour hath pronounced their begun Happiness, *Blessed are they that are pure in Heart (and assured them of full Happiness) for they shall see GOD.* This Wisdom is sent from Heaven on purpose to guide the Elect thither by the Way of Purity. And mark how well their Reward is suited to their Labour, their frequent contemplating and beholding of GOD's Purity as they could, while they were on their Journey, and their labouring to be like Him, shall bring them to sit down in Glory, and to be for ever the pure Beholders of that purest Object; *they shall see GOD*: What this is we cannot tell you, nor can you conceive it. But walk Heaven-wards in Purity, and long to be there, where you shall know what it means; *for you shall see Him as He is.* Now to that blessed Trinity be Praise for ever.





S E R M O N II.



PSALM lxxvi. 10.

*Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise Thee:
The Remainder of Wrath shalt Thou re-
strain.*

WHAT Man is this (said the Passengers in the Ship) that even the Winds and the Sea obey Him? Christ suddenly turns a great Tempest into a greater Calm. Surely those are no ordinary Words of Command, that swelling Waves and boisterous Winds, in the Midst of their Rage, are forced to hear, and taught to understand and obey them. Therefore the holding the Seas in the Hollow of his Hand, the bridling the Wind, and riding upon the Wings of it, we find peculiarly attributed to the Almighty. But no less, if not more wonderful is another of his Prerogatives, to wit, his Sovereignty over all Mankind, the divers and strange

strange Motions of the Heart of Man; admirable is it to govern those, both in respect of their Multitude and Irregularity. Consider we what Millions of Men dwell at once upon the Face of the Earth; and again, what Troops of Imaginations pass thro' the Fancy of any one Man, within the Compass of one Day: It is much to keep an Eye upon them, and to behold them all once; but far more to command and controul them all. Yet if they were all loyal and willingly obedient, tractable and easily curbed, it were more easy for us to conceive how they might be governed: But to bound and over-rule the unruly Hearts of Men, the most of them continually either plotting or acting Rebellion against their LORD, to make them all concur at last in one End, cannot be done but by a Power and a Wisdom that are infinite. GOD alone is the absolute Monarch of Mens Hearts, and the Ruler of all their Motions; He works his own Glory out of their Attempts, while they strive most to dishonour Him. *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise Thee: The Remainder of Wrath shalt Thou restrain.*

THE Psalm is made up of these two different Sorts of Thoughts, the one arising out of particular Experience, and the other out of a general Doctrine. These drawn from Experience, are set down in the Verses preceding the Text; and in it, with those that follow, is the Doctrine, with a Duty annexed to it; which two are Faith's main Supporters: Past Particulars verify the Doctrine, and the Generality of the Doctrine serves to explain the particular Experiences to all wise Observers. There is not a Treasure of the Merits of Saints in the Church, (as some dream;) but there is a Treasure of the precious Experiences of the Saints, which every Believer hath Right to make Use of; and these we should be versed in, that we may have them at Hand in Time
of

of Need, and know how to use them, both to draw Comfort from them to ourselves, and Arguments to use with God.

THE Words contain clearly two Propositions, both of them concerning *the Wrath of Man*: The former hath the Event of it, *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise Thee*: The latter the Limitation of it, *The Remainder of Wrath Thou wilt restrain*.

THAT the Virtues and Graces of Men praise the LORD, all Men easily understand. For they flow from Him, his Image and Superscription is upon them, and therefore no Wonder if He has from them a Tribute of Glory: Who knows not that Faith praises Him? Abraham *believed, and gave Glory to God*: Good Works, the Fruits of Faith, praise Him too, *Herein is your heavenly Father glorified*, (says our Saviour) *that you bring forth much Fruit*. But that the inordinate Wrath of Man should praise Him, may seem somewhat strange: Were it God's own Wrath (as Wrath is attributed to Him in Scripture) that might praise Him, for it is always most just: But that *wicked and disordered Wrath*, (which is undoubtedly here meant) that the Wrath of Men, that is both uncomely and dishonourable for themselves, (though they think otherwise) that even such a Wrath should honour God, and praise Him, argues well that He hath good Right to Praises, when every Thing (even Things that seem contrary to his Nature, as well as his Law) pay them to Him. And that He hath great Power and Wisdom, who obtains what is due to Him, even from those Persons and Things who are most unfit to pay it. This is the excellent Skill of his Wisdom, to draw that which shall go into the making up of the precious Composition of his Praise out of this Poison, for so the Word here used

used for *wrathful Heat*, doth sometimes signify; and this Wrath often proves so, a deadly Poison both to those it is incensed against, and to the very Breast wherein it is kindled.

BUT for the clearer understanding of this, it will be requisite to consider more distinctly: (1.) What this Wrath of Man is. (2.) How it can praise God. And lastly, The Infallibility of this Event: *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise Thee.*

IN the 148th Psalm, where *David* summons the Creatures to meet in that Song of Praise, to keep that full Consort, he calls not only the Heavens, and the Inhabitants of it, Angels and Lights; but these of the lower World to bear their Part in it: And not only Men, Beasts, Cattle, creeping Things, and the flying of Fowl; but the Creatures that do most resemble this Wrath, Fire, stormy Tempests, and Dragons. The Tenor of the Psalm doth shew, that by *the Wrath of Man* is to be understood the undue Rage of evil and ungodly Men against those whom God owns for his People. The Word here used, signifies a *hot* or *inflaming* Wrath; and indeed, such is the feverish distempered Anger of the Church's Enemies. And as too much Heat is an Enemy to solid Reason, this hot Wrath of theirs makes them incapable of wise Deliberation in themselves, and inflexible to the good Advice of others. It is true, *they take Counsel how to execute their Wrath*, as we shall hear anon, but they take no Counsel that may cool it. Anger is called by some a boiling of Blood about the Heart; but this ariseth from the Apprehension of something offensive, kindling a Desire of Revenge. Now it is a Wonder what the Powers of the World find in *Christ*, and his harmless Flock, that can incense them. St. James says of the Tongue, *that it is set on Fire of Hell.*

The same is the Original of this Wrath, *Why doth the Heathen rage*, saith the Psalmist? That is only, to what Purpose? Intimating that it is a fruitless Rage, and void of Success, in regard of GOD's Power. But why? That is, upon what Occasion? Considering *Christ* and his Church's Innocency. The Cause is only within themselves, to wit, that unhappy Antipathy of the Serpent's Seed against the Seed of the Woman. Thus this Wrath of Man is the causeless malicious Enmity of the Wicked against the Church of GOD; and under the Name of this Passion, I take to be here comprised likewise all the Attendants of it, all their crafty Complotments and Devices for the acting their Wrath. As there is Mention of the Nations Rage against *Christ*, in the second Psalm, so likewise of the Consultations of those that are of Quality fit for it, *The Rulers take Counsel together*. Further, this Wrath is not barely their inward Fire, but it flames into cruel and outrageous Practices, including likewise all the Instruments they make Use of. And of all these it is true, that GOD shall gain Glory by them. *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise Thee*.

BUT *the Wrath of Man* (says the Apostle) *worketh not the Righteousness of GOD*; how then can it accomplish his Praises? And this is the second Thing propounded.

ARE *Grapes gathered of Thorns, or Figs of Thistles*? Surely no: Therefore I called this Praise not the Fruit or proper Effect of Man's Wrath, but the Event or Consequent of it, by the Efficacy of Divine Providence. *The Wrath of Man shall praise Thee*.

THE Use which Thou wilt make of it shall tend to thy Praise. Thou wilt produce such Effects
from

from it, both in the Church and upon thine Enemies, when Thou sufferest thy Wrath to break forth, as shall furnish more Matter of thy Praises than if Thou hadst altogether restrained it. To instance this in some few Particulars.

It is the Fury of the Church's Enemies, that has made known to the World the invincible Courage and Patience of the Saints: Those Ages that have been most monstrous in Persecution, have most of all graced Christianity. Had there been no persecuting Emperors, who should have heard of those primitive Martyrs, that triumphed over the Cruelty of their Torments? Were there no Persecution, nor Peril, nor Sword against Believers, we should not have heard the Apostle say immediately after the Mention of those, *in all these we are more than Conquerors*; they could not have been so much as Conquerors had there been no Conflict.

AGAIN, as the Wrath of Man praises God in the invincible Patience of the Saints, so likewise in the unmoveable Stability of the Church. Is it not wonderful how so small and weak a Company as the Church hath often been reduced to, yea, hath always been, in respect of the World, could escape the Mouths of so many Lions, so many enraged Enemies, that were ready to devour it? And that we may see that this tends solely to the Praise of her great Protector, look at the Church's Song, penned by the Royal Prophet, *Psalms cxxiv. If the LORD had not been on our Side, when wicked Men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick.* The great Monarchies and Kingdoms of the World, that have risen with so much Splendor, have had their Periods, and been buried in the Dust. That Golden-headed and Silver-bodied Image, degenerated into worse Metal as it went lower, and the

brittle Feet, were the Cause of the Fall and Breaking of all the rest: But the Kingdom of *Jesus Christ*, though despicable in the Eyes of the World, and exposed to the Wrath of the World in all Ages, stands firm and cannot be removed. There is a common Emblem of the Winds blowing from all Quarters, and upon the Globe of the Earth, being in the Middle of them, is written *Immobilis*, Unmovable. This fitly resembles the Church. Why? It seems to be the Sport of all the Winds, but is indeed so established, that all of them, yea, *the very Gates of Hell cannot prevail against it*. Now the more the Church's Enemies labour to undo her, the more doth their Weakness, and the Power of her LORD appear; so that thus *the Wrath of Man doth praise Him*.

WHEN was the Church free from the World's Wrath? (To say nothing of the Church of the *Jews*) Did not those wicked Emperors of *Rome* think to have made the Christian Church short-liv'd, to have drowned her, newly born, in Floods of her own Blood? And in latter Ages, who knows not the Cruelties that have been practised by the *Turk* in the East, and the proud Prelate of *Rome* in the West? By which she hath sometimes been brought to so low a Point, that if you can follow her in History, it is by the Track of her Blood; and if you would see her, it is by the Light of those Fires in which her Martyrs have been burnt. Yet hath she still come through, and survived all that Wrath, and still shall, 'till she be made perfectly triumphant.

FARTHER: Man's Wrath tends to God's Praise in this, That GOD, giving Way to it, does so manage it by his sublime Providence, that it often directly crosses their own Ends, and conduces manifestly

nifestly to His. *Pharaoh* thought his dealing more cruelly with the *Jews* was Wisdom: *Let us work wisely*, (says he.) But whereas their ordinary Servility was become familiar to them, that same Accession of new Tyranny disposed the *Israelites* for a Desire of Departure, and their Departure made Way for *Pharaoh's* Destruction. Surely then the Wrath of Man commends the Wisdom of God, when He made him, by that, contrive and afford the Means of his own Downfall. *Job* xviii. 7. *The Steps of his Strength shall be straitned, and his own Counsel shall cast him down*, (says *Bildad*.) And that is a sad Fall; as that Eagle that was shot with an Arrow trimmed with her own Feathers.

BUT to close this Point. It is out of all Question, that the deserved Punishment of Man's unjust Wrath, doth always glorify the Justice of God, and the more He gives Way to their Wrath, the more notable shall be both their Punishment and the Justice of it. And tho' God seems neglective of his People, and of his Praise, while Man's Wrath prevails, yet the Truth is, He never comes too late to vindicate his Care of both: And when He defers longest, the Enemy pays dear Interest for the Time of Forbearance. He permits the Course of Man's Wrath for his own Glory; and when the Period which He hath fixed is come, He stops Man's Wrath, and gives Course to the Justice of his own. Nor is there any Possibility of escaping; He will right Himself, and be known by executing Judgment. *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise Thee*. And that is the third Thing propounded. The Infallibility of the Event.

THE Author of Nature governs all his Creatures, each in a suitable Way to the Nature He hath given them: He maintains in some Things a natural Necessity

cessity of Working, Contingency in others; and in others, Liberty. But all of them are subject to this Necessity of effecting his Purposes; and this Necessity is no Way repugnant to the due Liberty of Man's Will. Some maintain the Truth, some plot, others act against it, some please themselves in a wise Neutrality, and will appear so indifferent, that it would seem they might be accepted of all Sides for Judges of Controversies: And all these find no less Liberty to wind and turn themselves whither they please, than if there were no higher Hand. Shall not only the Zeal of the Godly, but even the Wrath of the Enemy, and the cold Discretion of the Neutral, all tend to his Praise whose supreme Will hath a secret, but a sure Sway in all their Actions? Whilst some Passengers sit, some walk one Way, some another; some have their Faces towards their Journey's End, some their Backs turned upon it; this wise Pilot does most skilfully guide the Ship to arrive with them all, at his own Glory. Happy they that propound and intend his Glory, as He Himself does; for in them *shall the Riches of his Mercy be glorified*: They that oppose Him lose this Happiness, but He is sure not to lose his Glory for all that, to wit, the Glory of his Justice. His Right Hand shall find out all his Enemies: *Surely the Wrath of Man shall praise Thee.*

THE Consideration of this Truth, thus in some Measure unfolded, may serve to justify the truly wise Dispensation of God against our imaginary Wisdom. Were the Matter referred to our Modelling, we would assign the Church constant Peace and Prosperity for her Portion, and not consent that the least Air of Trouble should come near her. We would have no Enemies to molest her, nor stir against her, or if they did stir, we would have them presently

presently repressed; and these, in our Judgment, would be the fairest and most glorious Tokens of his Love and Power, whose Spouse she is. But this carnal Wisdom is Enmity against God, and against the Glory of God, which rises so often out of the Wrath of his Enemies. Had God caused Pharaoh to yield at the very first, to the Release of his People, where had been the Fame of those miraculous Judgments in *Ægypt*, and Mercies on the *Israelites*, the one illustrating the other? Where had been that Name and Honour that God says He would gain to Himself, and that He did gain out of Pharaoh's final Destruction, making that stony-hearted King, and his Troops, *sink like a Stone in the Waters*, as *Moses* sings? Observe his proud Boastings immediately foregoing his Ruin, *I will pursue*, says he, *I will overtake, I will divide the Spoil, my Lust shall be satisfied on them; I will draw my Sword, and my Hand shall destroy them*: Soon after, the Sea quenches all this Heat. Commonly big Threatnings are unhappy Presages of ill Success. God, as He abhors these Boastings, so He delights in abasing the lofty Heart whence they flow; and it is his Prerogative to gain Praise to Himself out of their Wrath. *Hast thou an Arm like God?* (says the LORD to *Job*) *Then look upon the Proud, and bring them low, Job xl. 9, 11.* When *Sennacherib* came up against *Jerusalem*, his Blasphemies and Boastings were no less vast and monstrous than the Number of his Men and Chariots. Good *Hezekiah* turned over the Matter to God, spreading the Letter of Blasphemies before Him: God undertook the War, and assured *Hezekiah*, that the *Assyrian* should not so much as shoot an Arrow against the City, *but return the same Way he came, 2 Kings xix. 33.* And the Deliverance there promised and effected, is conceived to have been the Occasion of penning this very Psalm. Surely when an Angel did in one Night

slay

slay 185000 in their Camps, that Wrath, and those Threats, tended exceedingly to the Praise of the God of *Israel*. The Hook that He put in *Sennacherib's* Nostrils, (as the History speaks) to pull him back again, was more remarkable than the Fetters would have been if he had tied him at Home, or hindered his March with his Army.

WHO is he then that will be impatient because of God's Patience; and judge him slack in Judgment, while the Rage of the Wicked prevails? Know, that He is more careful of his own Glory than we can be; and the greater Heighth Man's Wrath arises to, the more Honour shall arise to Him out of it. Did not his Omnipotency shine brighter in the Flames of that Furnace into which the Children were cast, than if the King's Wrath had been at first cooled? Certainly, the more both it and the Furnace had their Heat augmented, the more was GOD glorified. *Who is that GOD* (said he blasphemously and proudly) *that can deliver you out of my Hands?* A Question highly dishonouring the Almighty. But stay 'till the real Answer come, and not only shall that Wrath praise Him, but that very same Tongue, though inured to Blasphemy, shall be taught to bear a main Part in these Praises. Let that Apostate Emperor, *Julian*, go taunting the Head, and tormenting the Members of that mystical Body: His closing with, *Thou hast overcome, O Galilean*, (meaning *Christ*,) shall help to verify, that whether its Course be longer or shorter, Man's Wrath ends always in GOD's Praise. In like Manner, the closing of the Lions Mouths spake louder to his Praise that stopt them, than if He had stopt *Daniel's* Enemies in the Beginning of their wicked Design. So hot was their Rage, that the King's favourable Inclination to *Daniel*, (of which, in other Cases, Courtiers use to be so devout Observers)

several) yea, his contesting and pleading for him, did profit him nothing, but they hurried their King to the Execution of their unjust Malice, though themselves were convinced, that nothing could be found against him, but only concerning the Law of his GOD. *The King set his Heart upon him to deliver him, and laboured to do it 'till the going down of the Sun,* and then those Counsellors, and Counsels of Darknes overcame him. But upon this black Night of their prevailing Wrath, followed immediately a bright Morning of Praises to *Daniel's* GOD: When the Lions, that were so quiet Company all Night to *Daniel*, made so quick a Breakfast of those accursed Courtiers that had accused him.

THE other Proposition concerns the limiting of this Wrath. *The Remainder of Wrath Thou wilt restrain.*

To take no Notice for the present, of divers other Readings of these Words, the Sense of them, as they are here very well rendered, may be briefly this: That whereas the Wrath of Man, to which GOD gives Way, shall praise Him, the rest shall be *curbed and bound up*, as the Word is; no more of it shall break forth than shall contribute to his Glory. Here might be considered, divers Ways, which GOD useth to stop the heady Course of Man's Wrath, and hinder its proceeding any further. But only,

LET us take out of it this Lesson, *That the most compendious Way to be safe from the Violence of Men, is to be in Friendship with GOD.* Is it not an incomparable Privilege to be in the Favour, and under the Protection of one, whose Power is so transcendent, that no Enemy can so much as stir without his Leave? Be persuaded then, Christians, in these

these Dangers that are so near us, every one to draw near to Him; remove what may provoke Him; let no reigning Sin be found either in your Cities or in your Villages, for He is a holy GOD. Is it a Time to multiply Provocations now, or is it not rather high Time to be humbled for the former? What shameless Impiety is it, to be now licentious or intemperate? To be proud, to oppress or extort? To prophane GOD's Day, and blaspheme his Name? All these Sins, and many others, abound amongst us, and that avowedly: Without abundant Repentance for these we shall smart, and the Wrath of our Enemies, though unjust in them, shall praise GOD in our just Punishment; though, doubtless, He will own his Church, and be praised in the final Punishment of their Wrath that rise against it.

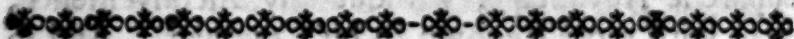
THERE is a remarkable Expression in the 99th Psalm, of GOD's dealing with his People, *He was favourable to them, though He took Vengeance on their Inventions.* A good Cause will not shelter an impenitent People from sharper Correction. It is a sad Word GOD speaks by his Prophet to his own People, *I Myself will fight against you.* A dreadful Enemy; and none indeed truly dreadful but He. O prevent his Anger, and you are safe. If perverse Sinners will not hear, yet let those that are indeed Christians mourn in secret, not only for their own Sins, but for the Sins of others. Labour to appease the Wrath of GOD, and He will either appease Man's Wrath, or turn it jointly to our Benefit and his own Glory. Let the Fear of the most high GOD, who hath no less Power over the strongest of his Enemies, than over the meanest of his Servants; let this Fear (I say) possess all our Hearts, and it will certainly expel that base Fear of the Wrath of Man. See how the Prophet opposes them in the 8th Chapter of *Isaiah*, *Fear not their Fear,*

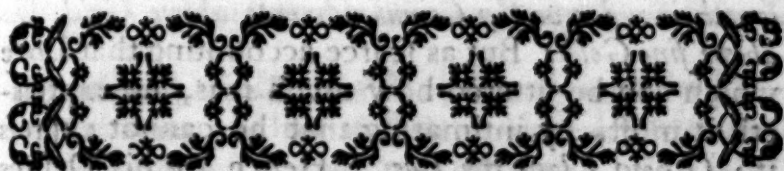
Fear, (says he) nor be afraid, but sanctify the LORD, and let Him be your Fear, and let Him be your Dread. This holy Fear begets the best Courage: The Breast that is most filled with it, abounds most in true Magnanimity.

FEAR thus, that you may be confident, not in yourselves, though your Policy and Strength were great: *Cursed is the Man that trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm:* But confident in that GOD, who is too wise to be surpris'd, too mighty to be foiled, and too rich to be out-spent in Provision; who can suffer his Enemy to come to the highest Point of apparent Advantage, without any Inconvenience, yea, with more Renown in his Conquest. And so a Christian who is made once sure of this, (as easily he may) is little careful about the rest: His Love to GOD prevailing over all his Affections, makes him very indifferent what becomes of himself or his dearest Friends, so GOD may be glorified. What though many fall in the Quarrel, yet it is sufficient that Truth in the End shall be victorious. Have not the Saints in all Ages been content to convey pure Religion to Posterity, in Streams of their own Blood, not of others? Well, hold fast by this Conclusion, that GOD can limit and bind up the most violent Wrath of Man, that though it swell it will not break forth. The stiffest Heart, as the Current of the most impetuous Rivers, is in his Hand, to appoint its Channels, and turn it as He pleaseth: Yea, it is He that hath shut up the very Sea with Bars and Doors, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, here shall thy proud Waves be stayed.* To see the Surges of a rough Sea come in towards the Shore, a Man would think they were hastening to swallow up the Land: But they know their Limits, and are beaten back into Foam. Though the Waves thereof toss themselves, as angry at their
 Restraint,

Restraint, yet the small Sand is a Check to the great Sea, yet *can they not prevail, though they roar, yet can they not pass over it.*

THE Sum is this: What GOD permits his Church's Enemies to do, is for his own further Glory; and reserving this, there is not any Wrath of Man so great, but He will either sweetly calm it, or strongly restrain it.





S E R M O N III.



PSALM CXIX. 136.

Rivers of Waters run down mine Eyes : because they keep not thy Law.

L O V E is the leading Passion of the Soul, all the rest follow the Measure and Motion of it, as the lower Heavens are said to be wheel'd about with the first.

WE have here a clear Instance of it in the Psalmist, testifying his Love to God, by his Esteem and Love of the Law or Word of God. What is each of the Verses of this Psalm but a Breathing and Vent of this Love, either in itself, or in the Causes, or in the Effects of it? Where he sets forth the Excellencies of God's Law, there you have the Causes of his Love; his observing and studying it, his Desire to know it more, and observe it better, these are the Effects

of his Affection to it. The Love itself he often expresseth: *Thy Word is pure, therefore thy Servant loveth it: I love thy Commandments above Gold, yea above fine Gold:* But as scarce accounting that Love which can be uttered how much it is, he expresseth it most, by intimating that he cannot express it; *O how I love thy Law!* Hence are his Desires (which are Love in Pursuit) so earnest after it: Amongst many, that is pathetical, Verse 20. *My Soul breaketh for the Longing that it hath unto thy Judgments at all Times.* Hence likewise his Joy and Delight (which are Love in Possession) Verse 14. *I have rejoiced in the Way of thy Testimonies as in all Riches;* and Verse 16. *I will delight myself in thy Statutes; I will not forget thy Word.* We have his Hatred of Things opposite, which is Love's Antipathy, Verse 113. *I hate vain Thoughts: but thy Law do I love: I hate and abhor Lying; but thy Law do I love.* And in Verse 139. you shall find his Zeal (which is no other but the Fire of Love blown into a Flame) *My Zeal hath consumed me; because mine Enemies have forgotten thy Words.* And (to omit the rest) in Verse 158. his Love to the Law shews its Sympathy in Sorrow, for the Violation of the Law, *I beheld the Transgressors, and was grieved; because they kept not thy Word.* And here you find this Grief swelling to such a Heighth, that it runs over into abundant Tears. *Rivers of Water run down mine Eyes; because they keep not thy Law.*

THE Words have briefly, *These Rivers* in their Channel and Course, (*They run down mine Eyes*) in their Spring and Cause, to wit, his Sympathy with God's Law broken by Men: *Because they keep not thy Law.* But both together clearly teach us, that good Men are affected with deep Sorrow, for the Sins of the Ungodly.

MORE particularly consider, 1. The Object of this Affection. 2. The Nature of it. 3. The Degree or Measure of it. 4. Its Subject.

1. THE Object is the Transgression of the Law, or to take it (as in the Text) Men Transgressors of the Law. *They keep not thy Law.* It is true, the whole Creation groaneth under the Burden of Sin in the Effects of it; but Sin itself is Man's Enemy, he being that reasonable Creature to whom the Law was given. Now in the general, it is Matter of Grief to a good Mind, to consider the universal Depravedness of Man's Nature. That he is a *Transgressor from the Womb.* That *the carnal Mind is Enmity against God, not subject to his Law,* neither while it remains such, can it be. And this Grief will go the deeper, by remembering from whence he is fallen. When he was new come forth of the Hands of his Maker, that Image of GOD that He stamp'd upon him, shined bright in his Soul; the whole Frame of it was regular and comely, the inferior Faculties obeying the higher, and all of them subject to GOD. But how soon was he seduced, and then what a Change ensued? There is ever since such a Tumult and Confusion in the Soul, that it cannot hear the Voice of GOD's Law, much less obey and keep it. Hence is that Complaint of the Psalmist oftner than once, *They are all gone out of the Way, and become abominable; there is none that doth Good, no not one.* The World (in *adunai*) lies buried in it, as the Word is used in the Inscription of Tombs. Look abroad in the World, and what shall ye see but a Sea of Wickedness over the Face of the whole, which draws from a discerning Eye that beholds it, these Rivers of Tears? The greatest Part not knowing the true GOD, nor the true Religion, and the true Way of

his Worship; and for those that do, yet how unlike are they to it in their Lives? The reformed Churches this Way, how unreformed still.

BUT more particularly, to branch this out a little in several Sorts of Men; this godly Grief has a very large Sphere, it will extend to remote People, remote every Way, not only in Place, but in Manners and Religion, even to Heathens, and gross Idolaters; Yea, the very Sins of Enemies, and of such as are profest Enemies to God, yet moves the tender-hearted Christian to Sorrow and Compassion. *Of whom I now tell you weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ, Philip. iii. 18.* Enemies, and yet he speaks of them weeping, what he writes concerning them, he would have written in Tears, if that had been legible. Thus you see the Extent of this Grief. But yet, out of all Question, it will be more intense in Particulars of nearer Concernment; it is the Burden of the pious Man's Heart, that his Law, who made the World, and gives Being to all Things, should be so little regarded, and so much broken thro' all the World, but yet more especially that in his own Church, amongst his own People, Transgression should abound. Sins within the Church are most properly Scandals; God manifests Himself (so to speak) most sensible of those, and therefore the godly Man is so too. Whether they be the continual Enormities of profane Persons, which are by external Profession in the Face of the visible Church, though indeed they be in it, but, as Spots and Blemishes, as the Apostle speaks; or whether it be the Apostacy, or the gross Falls of true Converts. All these are the great Grief of the Godly. The Relations of Men, either natural or civil, will add something too; this Sorrow will be greater than ordinary in
a Chri-

a Christian, he will melt in a particular Tenderneſs for the Sins of his Kindred, Parents or Children, Husband or Wife; and most of all Ministers for their People. How pathetically does this appear in St. Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 21. *And lest when I come again my GOD will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the Uncleanneſs and Fornication and Lasciviousneſs which they have committed.* A Man cannot but be more particularly touched with the Sins of that Nation, and of that City, and Congregation, and Family, whereof he is a Member as Lot dwelling among them of Sodom, in seeing and hearing, *vexed his righteous Soul from Day to Day, with their unlawful Deeds.* The Sins of more eminent Persons, either in Church or Commonwealth, will most affect a prudent Christian, because their Inclinations and Actions import the Publick much; therefore the Apostle, when he had exhorted to Supplications and Prayers for all Men, particularly mentions *Kings, and such as are in Authority.* And truly, when they are abused by Misadvice and corrupt Counsel, some of these Tears were very well spent, if poured forth before GOD in their Behalf, for in his Hand (as that wise King confesseth) are their Hearts even as Rivers of Waters; let their Motion be never so impetuous, yet he turns them whither he pleaseth; and who knows but these Rivers of Waters, these Tears, may prevail with the LORD to reduce the violent Current of that River (a King's heart) from the wrong Channel?

BUT to proceed: The second Thing to be considered in this Affection, is the Nature of it, (1) It is not a Stoical Apathy, an affected Carelessness, much less a delightful Partaking with sinful Practices. (2) Not a proud Setting off their own

Goodness, with marking the Sin of others, as the *Pharisee* did in the Gospel. (3) Not the Derision, and Mocking of the Folly of Men, with that laughing Philosopher, it comes nearer to the Temper of the other that wept always for it. It is not a bitter Anger, breaking forth into Railings and Reproaches, nor an upbraiding Insultation; nor is it a vindictive Desire of Punishment, venting itself in Curses and Imprecations, which is the rash Temper of many. The Disciples Motion to *Christ* was far different from that Way; and yet He says to them, *You know not of what Spirit ye are.* Thus heady Zeal often mistakes and flatters itself; we find not here a Desire of Fire to come down from Heaven, upon the Breakers of the Law, but such a Grief as Would rather bring Water to quench it, if it were falling on them.

3. THE degree of this Sorrow is vehement, not a light transient Dislike, but a deep Resentment; such as causeth not some few Sighs, or some Drops of Tears, but Rivers.

It is true, The *Measure and Degree* of Sorrow for Sin, whether their own or others, is different in divers Persons, that are yet true Mourners, and they are also different in the same Person, at divers Times, not only upon the Difference of the Cause, but even where the Cause is equal, upon the different Influence and Working of the Spirit of God. Sometimes it pleaseth Him to melt the Heart more abundantly, and so He raises these Rivers, in the Eyes, to a higher Tide than ordinary. Sometimes they remove again, but yet this godly Sorrow is always serious and sincere; and that is the other Quality here remarkable in it. It is not a feigned weeping only in publick; for the Speech is here directed to God, as a more frequent

quent Witness of these Tears than any other, who is always the Witness of the Sincerity of them, even when they cannot be hid from the Eyes of Men: For I deny not but they may, and should have Vent in publick, especially at such Times as are set a-part for solemn Mourning and Humiliation; yet, even then, usually these Streams run deepest, where they are stillest and most quietly conveyed. But howsoever, sure they would not be fewer, and less frequent alone, than in company. *Jer. ix. 1. Oh that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep Day and Night, for the Slain of the Daughter of my People. And xiii. 17. But if ye will not hear it, my Soul shall weep in secret Places for your Pride, and mine Eye shall weep sore, and run down with Tears, because the LORD's Flock is carried away captive.*

THE Subject of this Affection is, not the Ungodly themselves that are profest Transgressors of this Law, they rather make a Sport of Sin, they play and make themselves merry with it, as the Philistines did with Sampson, 'till it bring the House down about their Ears: But the Godly are they that are affected with this Sorrow, such as are careful Observers of the Law themselves, and mourn first for their own Breaches, for these are the only fit Mourners for the Transgression of others.

Now to enquire a little into the Cause of this, Why the breaking of GOD's Law should cause such Sorrow in the Godly, as here breaketh forth into abundance of Tears; we shall find it very reasonable if we consider, 1. The Nature of Sin, which is the Transgression or Breach of the Law, as the Apostle defines it. 2. The Nature of this Sorrow

Sorrow and these Tears. 3. The Nature of the Godly.

1. SIN is the greatest Evil in the World, yea, (in Comparison) it alone is worth the Name of Evil, and therefore may justly challenge Sorrow, and the greatest Sorrow; the greatest of Evils it is, both formally, in that it alone is the Defilement and Deformity of the Soul, and casually, being the Root from whence all other Evils spring, the fruitful Womb that conceives and brings forth all those Miseries that either Man feels or hath Cause to fear. Whence are all those personal Evils incident to Men in their Estates, or in their Bodies, or Minds, outward Turmoils and Diseases, and inward Discontents, and Death itself, in all the Kinds of it? Are they not all the Fruits of that bitter Root? Whence arise these publick Miseries of Nations and Kingdoms, but from the National Sins of the People, as the deserving and procuring Cause at GOD's Hand? And withal, often from the ambitious and wicked Practices of some particular Men, as the working and effecting Causes, so that every Way, if we follow these Evils home to their Original, we shall find it to be Sin, or the breaking of GOD's Law.

UNGODLY Men, though they meddle not with publick Affairs at all, yea, though they be faithful and honest in meddling with them, yet by Reason of their Impious Lives, are Traytors to their Nation; they are truly the Incendiaries of States and Kingdoms. And these Mourners, though they can do no more, are the most loyal and serviceable Subjects, bringing Tears to quench the Fire of Wrath. And therefore, Sorrow and Tears are not only most due to Sin, as the greatest of Evils, but they are best bestowed upon

upon it, if they can do any Thing to its Redress ; because that is both the surest and most compendious Way to remedy all the rest, Sin being the Source and Spring of them all.

THIS is the Reason why *Jeremiah* ix. 1. when he would weep for the Slain of his People, is straightway led from that to bewail the Sin of his People, Verse 2, 3, &c. And in his Book of Tears and Lamentations, he often reduces all these sad Evils to Sin as causing them, *The Crown is fallen from our Head, Wee unto us that we have sinned.* He turns the Complaint more to the Sin than to the Affliction.

SECONDLY, Consider the Nature of these Tears: Tears spent for worldly Crosses are all lost. They run all to Waste ; they are *Lachrymæ inanes*, empty fruitless Things: But Tears shed for the Breach of God's Law, are the Means to quench God's Wrath. The Prayers and Tears of some few may avert the Punishment of many, yea, of a whole Land, and if not so, yet are they not lost. The Mourners themselves have always Benefit by them, as you have it in that known Place, *Ezek. ix.* They that mourned for the common Abominations were marked, and the common Desolation took not hold on them. This Mourning for other Mens Wickedness, both testifies and preserves the good Man's Innocence; I say it preserves it, as well as testifies it ; it keeps them from the Contagion of that bad Air they live in; for without this, Sin would soon grow familiar. It is good for Men to keep up, and maintain in their Souls, a Dislike of Sin, for when once it ceaseth to be displeasing to a Man, it will e're long begin to be pleasing to Him.

If we consider the Nature of the Godly we shall see this Mourning suit with it exceedingly, both in regard of his Relation to GOD and to Man; GOD is his Father, and therefore it cannot but grieve him much to see Him offended and dishonoured. Love to GOD, and consequently to his Law, and Love to Men, and Desire of their Good is the Spring of these Rivers. A godly Man is tender of GOD's Glory and of his Law; every Stroke that it receives, strikes his Heart; and he hath Bowels of Compassion, towards Men, and would be glad if they were converted and saved.

He considers every Man as his Brother, and therefore is sorrowful to see him run the Hazard of perishing in Sin. The former Sympathy, whereby the godly Man tenders the Glory of GOD, is from his Piety; this latter, whereby he pities the Misery of Man, is from his Charity; and from these flow the Rivers, that run down his Eyes.

To be too sensible of worldly Crosses, and prodigal of Tears, upon such slight Occasions is little better than childish or womanish, but these Tears that flow from Love to GOD, and Grief for Sin, have neither Uncomeliness nor Excess in them; abundance of them will beseem any Man that is a Christian. Let profane Men judge it a Weakness to weep for Sin, yet we see *David* do it. Men of Arms and Valour need not fear Disparagement by weeping thus. It is the truest Magnanimity to be sensible of the Point of GOD's Honour, which is injured by Sin.

AGAIN, The Consideration of Truth, will discover the World guilty of very much Ingratitude to godly Men; it hath always been the Custom

of profane Persons, to seek to brand Religion with Disloyalty and Turbulency, and to make it pass for an Enemy to the Peace and Prosperity of States and Kingdoms. But there you see clearly with what Affection Religion furnishes Men, towards the Publick, causing them to mourn for common Sins, and so to prevent (as far as in them lies) common Calamities. And this is of no little Consequence; for truly it is not foreign Power, so much as Sin at Home, that ruins Kingdoms: All the Winds that blow without the Earth, be they never so violent, stir it not, only that which is within its own Bowels makes an Earthquake. It was a grave Answer of *Epaminondas*, being asked what he was doing, solitary and pensive, in the Time of solemn Mirth and Feasting, "While my Country-men (says he) are so peaceably Feasting I am thinking on the best Means to preserve that Peace to them, that it may continue;" which, a little altered, is applicable to the Godly. They are often mourning for the Sins, and praying for the Peace of the Places where they live, when, in the mean Time, the greatest Part are multiplying Sin, and so forfeiting their Peace.

Rivers of Waters] THIS is a melancholy Life says the Worldling; yes, truly, if there were no more in it than what he can perceive. But besides the full Joy laid up for them, and the Beginnings of it here, there is even in this Mourning an unknown Sweetness and Delight. The Philosopher says, even of common Tears, that there is some Things please the Taste by their very Tartness. But of these Tears, they that know them, know it to be eminently true, that they are pleasant. But be this Exercise, as sad as the Profane call it, yet why observe they not, that they themselves are the Cause

Cause of it; as they may read here, *Because they keep not GOD's Law.*

To pass by divers Inferences that the Words afford, let us take Notice of the Duty here practised, and how much we are all obliged to the present Practice of it. Who will deny that we have too much Matter and Occasions of it? Besides the Sorrow of *Sion*, and the Distress of our Brethren, what Corner of the Land, what Rank or Condition of People is there, that abounds not in gross and heinous Violation of GOD's Law? *They keep not thy Law.* Magistrates and Judges turning Judgment into Gall and Wormwood, Ministers remiss in that great Care, the Care of Souls; People wallowing in Ungodliness. The greater oppressing the less, and the less defrauding and wronging the greater. What vile Uncleaness and Wantonness! What shameful Drunkenness and Excess! And some so far from Mourning for others Guiltiness of this Sin, that they glory in making others guilty of it, and count it a Pastime to make others drunk; and this is a far greater Sin than Drunkenness itself, for these Men, while they make Beasts of their Companions, make Devils of themselves.

AGAIN: How is the Land filled with Oaths and Cursings? How are your Streets, and almost all Companies, defiled, partly with tearing the precious Name of GOD; partly with calling on the Devil. There would be no end of reckoning up all Particulars; Sabbath-breaking, Fraud and Covetousness, Pride and Malice, and Envyings one of another; But the Sum is this, An Universal Want of the Fear of GOD and his Law.

AND

AND the Cause of this, is, in a great Part, Ignorance of GOD, and of his Law; and truly, it is wonderful, under so much Light, to find so much Darkness, not only in the Skirts, and remote Places, but even in the prime Parts of this Land. Multitudes that are Strangers to the very Principals and Fundamentals of that Religion which they profess, and they that have Knowledge, abusing it, and sinning against it, continuing in Profaneness; and without this true Religion, it is as impossible to have renewed Hearts and Lives, as to have a House without a Foundation. And this Atheism and Ignorance amongst People, is in a great Part to be imputed to the Corruption and Sloth of Ministers; and would to GOD there were not many Congregations, not only altogether destitute, but such as are freezing under a cold and lifeless Ministry.

You see then, we want not Causes of Mourning and Humiliation, on all Hands. But our Want is inward, of that due Disposition for it, *Softness of Heart*, and that *Love to GOD*, which should melt and mollify the Heart. Let us then stir up ourselves, and one another to this godly Sorrow, for the Sins of the Land; there is Need of Rivers of Tears for these Heaps of Sin, as they tell of his letting in a River to that monstrous Stable of *Augias*, that could not otherwise have been cleansed in the Time allotted him.

AND truly, as the Duty lies upon all the Faithful, the Ministers of the Word ought to be most eminent in it, the chief Mourners. And all that with the Good of Church and Kingdom, ought to bear a Part with them, according to their Measure. Have we not much Need to intreat Reconcilement with GOD, that He prove not our Enemy? Yes,

surely, and were we reconciled with Him, we would have little Need to fear the Power of Man.

Now they that would be profitable Mourners for others Sins, by all Means, must have these two Conditions I mention'd; to be careful Observers of the Law themselves, and to mourn for their own breaking of it. Now to the observing of the Law, it is absolutely needful to know and understand it, and that not only in the Letter, but according to the Spiritual Sense and Meaning of it; for without this Knowledge, a Man may light upon some Duty by Guess, as it were in the Dark, but observe, the Law he cannot. (2) As a Man must know this Law, so he must be inwardly convinced and persuaded of the Divinity of it, that it is God's Law. (3) He must have a deep Apprehension of the Majesty and Authority of the Law-giver, to work Reverence, and of his Goodness to beget Love; and the due Mixture of these two, will both strongly command, and sweeten Obedience to his Commandments. And this Obedience, though it be not an absolute fulfilling of the Commandments, yet it is a Respect to them all, as this Psalm hath it. And from this Respect to the Law, will flow that other Condition, of grieving when we break it.

AND besides all other Things that should make a Christian's own Sin grievous to him, there is one Thing cannot but move him much, The Consideration of the Sorrow and Sufferings of *Christ*. To view the Bleedings of the LORD JESUS, cannot chuse but pierce a believing Soul, and make it say, Did my Redeemer shed his Blood for my Sins, and shall not I myself shed Tears for them? I know the natural Constitution of some denies them
Tears;

Tears; but if it do so to any, make 'up that then with inward Grief, and it is well enough; that Eye of GOD can discern that as well as the other: But truly, where Men have Tears for lighter Causes (for all other Causes are lighter) and none for this, they feel not yet the Weight of Sin, except that Want be through the Deepness of Sorrow, which sometimes will stop the Current of Tears, though it used to run, at other Times: But this is a rare and happy Impediment.

THIS Grief then must begin at Home. But it must not rest there; and truly, were it comes in that Order, it may be some Way a stronger Evidence of Sincerity, to mourn for others Sins, than for our own; for there seems to be more of GOD in it, because there is less in it of ourselves, and our own particular Interest.

Now you will possibly think it but an unpleasant Duty that you have heard urged all this while; but look forward, and consider the Issue of it. That which *Christ* speaks in particular to his Disciples, is generally true in all Christians. *John xvi. 20. Ye shall weep and lament, but the World shall rejoice; ye shall be sorrowful, but your Sorrow shall be turned or made into Joy. The Water of those Tears shall be turned into Wine of Consolation. The Traffick of these Rivers is gainful, they export Grief and import Joy. When these Tears are called Seed, the Harvest is called Joy. They that sow in Tears shall reap in Joy. They are here called Rivers, and they are answered with a River, Psal. xxxvi. 8. for which they shall in the End be perfectly exchanged. Thou shalt make them drink of the River of thy Pleasures. And Revel. vii. 17. The Lamb shall feed them, and lead them unto living Fountains of Waters. Here they run*
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down

down the Eyes, and water the Cheeks; and there you read that GOD shall wipe them away from their Eyes. Who would not be content to weep, to have GOD wipe away their Tears with his own Hand? Be ambitious then to be found amongst the Mourners in *Sion*, and when you remove from this Valley of Tears, GOD shall at once fully wipe all the Stain of Sin from your Souls, and all Tears of it from your Eyes. And as He shall wipe away the Tears with the one Hand, He will set the Crown upon your Heads with the other.





S E R M O N IV.



ISAIAH. IX. 1.

*Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the
Glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.*

ADMIRABLE is the Worth, and Depth of Divine Providence; this either we know not, or at least seldom remember; while we forget the Wonders of Providence, we direct our Thoughts to baser Objects, and think not on it; and while we forget the Depth of Providence (if at any Time we look toward it) we judge rashly and think amiss of it. If this be true of that general Providence whereby God rules the World, it is more true of his special Providence towards his Church. This is both the most excellent Piece of it, and therefore best worth the Reading, and also the hardest Piece, and therefore it requires Sobriety in Judging;

Judging; above all other Things he that suddenly judges in this, make Haste to err; to have a right View of it, it must be taken altogether, and not by Parcels: Pieces of rarest Artifice, while they are a making, seem little worth, especially to an unskilful Eye, which being compleated, command Admiration. There is a Time when the Daughters of *Sion* embrace the Dunghill, and *fit desolate in the Streets*. And at that same Time the Voice of *Babylon* is, *I shall sit as a Queen and shall see no Sorrow*. All is out of Order here. But if we stay a while we shall see *Sion* and *Babylon* appointed to change Seats, by the great Master of the World; *Come down* (says He) *Daughter of Babylon, and sit in the Dust*, Isa. xlvii. 1. And here to *Sion*; *Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the Glory of the LORD is risen upon thee*. It is an entire Catastrophe, both Parties find a notable Alteration together. That same Hand that exalts the one, ruins the other. When the Sun rises upon the Church, her Antipodes must needs be covered with Darknes. As we find in the next Verse to the Text. *Darkness shall cover the Earth, and gross Darknes the People, but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his Glory shall be seen upon thee*.

THE Prophet elevated by the Spirit of God to a View of after Ages, as clear as if present, seems here to find his People sitting under the dark Mantle of a sad and tedious Night, and having long expected the Sun's Return in vain, before its Time, they give over Expectation when it is near them. Now the Prophet as it were standing awake on some Mountain, perceives the Day approaching, and the golden Chariots of the Morning of Deliverance hastening forward, and seems to come speedily with these glad News, to a Captive People, and sounds this Trumqet in their Ears, *Arise, shine, for thy Light*

Light is come. The very Manner of Expression is sudden, and rousing without a Copulative, *Not arise and shine: But arise, shine.*

THE Words have in them, a clear Relation to a low Posture, and obscure Condition; they suppose a People lying, or sitting without Light; deep Distress is that dark Soil that best sets off the Lustre of marvellous Deliverances; and among many other Reasons of the Church's Vicissitudes, why may not this be one. The LORD is more illustrious in the World by that deep Wisdom and great Power that shines when He raises and restores her from desperate Afflictions, than if He had still preserved her in constant Ease? He seems sometimes careless of her Condition, and regardless of her Groans; but even then, is He waiting the most fit Time to be gracious, as our Prophet speaks: And when it is Time, out of the basest Estate, He brings her forth more fresh, strong, and beautiful than before. *Though you have lain among the Pots, ye shall be as the Wings of a Dove covered with Silver, and her Feathers with yellow Gold,* Psalm lxxviii. 13. Do with the Church what you will, she shall come through, and that with Advantage. *Mergas profundo pulchrior exilit,* as one says of Rome, keep the Church seventy Years captive, yet after that, *she shall arise and shine more glorious than ever.*

BUT surely the Strain of this Evangelick Prophecy rises higher than any temporal Deliverance. Therefore we must rise to some more spiritual Sense of it, not excluding the former. And that which some call divers Senses of the same Scripture, is indeed, but divers Parts of one full Sense. This Prophecy is out of Question, a most rich Discription of the Kingdom of *Christ*, under the Gospel. And in this Sense, this Invitation to *Arise and shine* is mainly

mainly addressed to mystical *Jerusalem*, yet not without some Privilege to literal *Jerusalem* beyond other People. They are first invited to *arise and shine*, because this Sun arose first in their Horizon. *Christ* came of the *Jews*, and came first to them. *The Redeemer shall come to Sion*, says our Prophet in the former Chapter, but miserable *Jerusalem* knew not the Day of her Visitation, nor the Things that concerned her Peace, and therefore they are now hid from her Eyes: She delighted to deceive herself with Fancies of (I know not what) imaginary Grandeur, and outward Glory, to which the promised MESSIAH should exalt her; and did, in that Kind particularly, abuse this very Prophecy; so doting upon a Sense grossly literal, she forfeited the Enjoyment of those spiritual Blessings that are here described. But, undoubtedly, the *Jews* shall once more be commanded to *arise and shine*, and their Return shall be the Riches of the *Gentiles*; and that shall be a more glorious Time than ever the Church of GOD did yet behold. Nor is there any Inconvenience, if we think the high Expressions of this Prophecy have some spiritual Reference to that Time; since the great Doctor of the *Gentiles* applies some Words of the former Chapter to that Purpose, *Rom. xi. 29*. They forget a main Point of the Church's Glory, that pray not daily for the *Jews* Conversion.

BUT to pass that, and insist on the spiritual Sense of these Words, as directed to the whole Church of *Christ*. They contain a powerful Incitement to a twofold Act, inforced (as I conceive) by one Reason, under a twofold Expression, neither of them superfluous, but each giving Light to the other, and suiting very aptly with the two Words of Command: *Arise, for the Glory of the LORD is risen; shine, for thy Light is come.*

I WILL

I WILL not now sub-divide these Parts again, but rather unite them into this one Proposition: *The Coming and Presence of Christ, engages all to whom He comes, to arise and shine.* In this Proposition may be considered, the Nature of the Duties, the Universality of the Subject, and the Force of the Reason. First, the Nature of the Duties, *what it is to arise and shine.*

ARISING hath either Reference to a Fall, or to some contrary Posture of Sitting or Lying; or to one of these two Conditions that are so like one another, Sleep or Death: And to all these, spiritually understood, may it here be referred. This is the Voice of the Gospel to the Sons of Adam, *Arise*, for in him they all *fell*. The first Sin of that first Man, was the great Fall of Mankind: It could not but undo us, it was from so high a Station. Our daily Sins are our daily Falls, and they are the Fruits of that great one. *Thou hast fallen by thine Iniquity*, says the LORD to his People, *Hosea xiv. 1.* For these Postures of Sitting and Lying, the Scripture makes Use of them both, to signify the State of Sin. Says not St. John, *The whole World lies in Wickedness*, 1 John v. 19? Are not the People said to *sit in Darkeness*, Matt. iv. 16? Which is directly opposite to *arise and shine*. In the Darkeness of *Ægypt*, it is said, the People sat still; none arose from their Places. In the gross Mist of corrupt Nature, Man cannot bestir himself to any spiritual Action, but when Light is come, then he may, and should arise.

Now for Sleep and Death. Sin is most frequently represented, in Holy Writ, under their black Vizors. To forbear Places where they are severally so used, we shall find them jointly in one, *Eph. v. 14. Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead;*

Dead; which Place seems to have special Allusion to this very Text.

THE impenitent Sinner is as one buried in Sleep; his Soul is in Darkness, fit for Sleep, and loves to be so. That he may sleep the sounder, he shuts all the Passages of Light, as Enemies to his Rest; and so, by close Windows and Curtains, makes an artificial Night to himself within; not a Beam appears there, though without the clear Day of the Gospel shines round about him. The Senses of his Soul, as we call them, are all bound up, and are not exercised to discern Good and Evil: And his leading Faculty, his Understanding, is surcharged with sleepy Vapours, that arise incessantly from his perverse Affections; nor hath his Mind any other Exercise, in this sleepy Condition, but the vain Business of Dreaming: His most refined and wisest Thoughts, are but mere Extravagancies from Man's due End; and his greatest Concernments, nothing but golden Dreams. Yet he is serious in them, and no Wonder, for who can discern the Folly of his own Dream 'till he is awake? *He that dreams he eateth, when he awakes finds his Soul empty, and not 'till then, Isaiah xxix. 8.* Now while he thus sleeps, his great Business lies by; yet spends he his Hand-Breadth of Time as fast, while he is fast asleep, as if he were in continual Employment: Judge then, if it be not needful to bid this Man *Arise.*

LASTLY, This Voice may import, that Man is spiritually dead. GOD is the Life of the Soul, as it is of the Body; while He dwells there it is both comely and active, but once destitute of his Presence, becomes a Carcass, where, besides Privation of Life and Motion, there is a positive Filthiness, a Putrefaction in the Soul, unspeakably worse than that

that of dead Bodies. And as dead Bodies are removed from the Sight of Men, dead Souls are cast out from the favourable Presence of GOD, 'till *Christ's* saying *Arise*, revive them. The Scripture is undeniably clear in this, that Man is naturally dead in Sin. The Gospel bids him *Arise*, and it is *Christ* that is his Life, and that raises him. Thus we see, in some Measure, what it is for Men to *Arise*.

Now being risen, they must *shine*, and that two Ways, jointly and publickly, as they make up visible Churches; and likewise personally, in their particular Conversation. First then, What is the shining of the true Church? Doth not a Church then shine, when Church-Service is raised with pompous Ceremonies, rich Furniture, and gaudy Vestments? Is not the Church then beautiful? Yes, indeed, but all the Question is whether this be the proper genuine Beauty or no; whether this be not strange Fire. Methinks it cannot be better decided, than by referring to St. *John*, in his Book of the *Revelations*. We find there the Description of two several Women, the one riding in State, arrayed in Purple, decked with Gold, and precious Stones, and Pearl, *Rev. xvii. 4.* The other in rich Attire too, but of another Kind, cloathed with the Sun, and a Crown of twelve Stars on her Head, Chapter xii. The Ornament of one was all earthly; this Woman's is all celestial: What need she borrow Light and Beauty from precious Stones, that is cloathed with the Sun, and crowned with Stars; she wears no sublunary Ornaments, but, which is more noble, she treads upon them, the Moon is under her Feet: Now if you know (as you do all without Doubt) which of these two is the Spouse of *Christ*, you can easily resolve the Question. The Truth is, those Things seem to
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deck Religion, but they undo it. Observe where they are most used, and we shall find little or no Substance of Devotion under them, as we see in that corrupt Church of *Rome*. This Painting is dishonourable for *Christ's* Spouse; and besides, it spoils her natural Complexion. The superstitious Use of Torches and Lights in the Church by Day, is a Kind of Shining, but surely not commanded here. No it is an Affront done both to the Sun in Heaven, and to the Sun of Righteousness in the Church.

WHAT is meant then, when the Church is commanded to shine, or be enlightened? These two Readings give the entire Sense of the Word; having no Light of herself, she must receive Light, and then shew it; be enlightened, and then shine: She is enlightened by *Christ*, the Sun of Righteousness, shining in the Sphere of the Gospel. *This is that Light that comes to her, and the Glory of the LORD that arises upon her*: Hence she receives her Laws and Form of Government, and her Shining is the pure Exercise of those, and Conformity to them.

AND the personal Shining of the several Members of a Church, is a comely Congruity with pure Worship and Discipline, and it is that which now is most needful to be urged. Every Christian Soul is personally engaged first to be enlightened, and then to shine; and we must draw our Light for ourselves, from the same Source that furnishes the Church with her publick Light. There is a Word in the Civil Law, *Uxor fulget radiis mariti*, The Wife shines by the Rays of her Husband's Light. Now every faithful Soul is espoused to *Christ*, and therefore may well shine, seeing the Sun Himself is their Husband; He adorns them with a double Beauty of Justification and Sanctification: By that they

they shine more especially to God, by this to Men. The Light of Sanctification must begin in the Understanding, and from thence be transfused to the Affections, and from thence break forth and shine into Action. This is then the Nature of the Duties, *Arise and shine.*

WE are, secondly, to observe the Universality of the Subject. Every Man that knows *Christ*, is here engaged to shine too; neither Grandeur exempts from the Duty of Shining, nor Meanness exclude from the Privilege of Shining: Men of low Condition need not despair of it, for it is a spiritual Act; great Men need not despise it, for it is a noble Act to shine by *Christ's* Light. In the third Verse of this Chapter it is said to the Church, *Kings shall come to the Brightness of thy Rising.* To what End, but to partake of her Light, and shine with her. And indeed the regal Attire of *Christ's* Righteousness, and the white Robes of Holiness, will exceeding well become Kings and Princes. *Give the King thy Judgments, O LORD, and thy Righteousness to the King's Son.*

THE third and last Thing propounded was, the Force of the Reason, that *Christ's* Presence engages to *Arise and shine*; wherein it is supposed, that *Christ*, declared in the Gospel, is the Light which is said here to come, and the Glory of the LORD which is said to be risen; so that now, it should be more amply cleared, how *Christ* is Light, and the Glory of the LORD, and what his Coming and Rising is; but of these afterwards. I shall close now with a Word of Exhortation.

ARISE then, for the Glory of the LORD is risen. The Day of the Gospel is too precious, that any of it should be spent in Sleep, or Idleness, or worthless

Business: Worthless Business detains many of us: *Arise, immortal Souls, from moiling in the Dust, and working in the Clay, like Egyptian Captives. Address yourselves to more noble Work; there is a Redeemer come, that will pay your Ransom, and rescue you from such vile Service, for more excellent Employment. It is strange, how the Souls of Christians can so much forget their first Original from Heaven, and their new Hopes of returning thither, and the rich Price of their Redemption, and dwell so low, and dote so much upon Trifles. How is it that they hear not their Well-beloved's Voice, crying, Arise my Love, my fair one, and come away? Though the Eyes of Believers are so enlightened, yet their Spirits are often seized with a Kind of Drowsiness, and sometimes even then, when they should be of most Activity. The Time of Christ's Check to his three Disciples made it very sharp, though the Words are mild, What! could you not watch with Me one Hour? Shake off, believing Souls, that heavy Humour. Arise, and satiate the Eye of Faith with the Contemplation of Christ's Beauty, and follow after Him, 'till you attain the Place of full Enjoyment. And you others that never yet saw Him, Arise, and admire his matchless Excellency. The Things you esteem great, are but so through Ignorance of his Greatness: His Brightness, if you saw it, would obscure to you the greatest Splendor of the World, as all those Stars that go never down upon us, yet are swallowed up in the surpassing Light of the Sun when it arises: Stand up from the Dead, and He shall give you Light: Arise and work while it is Day, for the Night shall come wherein none can work, says our Saviour Himself: Happy are they that arise early in the Morning of their Youth, for the Day of Life is very short, and the Art of Christianity long and difficult. Is it not a grievous Thing, that Men never consider*

der why they came into the World, 'till they are upon the Point of going out again? Nor think how to live, 'till they be summoned to die? But most of all unhappy he, that never wakes out of that pleasing Dream of false Happiness, 'till he fall into eternal Misery: *Arise* then betimes, and prevent this sad Awakening.

AND being risen, *put on your beautiful Garments*. Draw towards you, with the Hand of Faith, the rich Mantle of *Christ's* Righteousness. *It is Time to awake*, says the Apostle, *Rom. xiii. 11*. And presently after, *Put ye on the LORD Jesus Christ*. And it is a Wonder, how a Sinner can rest, while he is out of this Garment; for there is no other in Heaven nor Earth can make him shine to GOD, and so shelter him from the Stroke of Justice: Put Him on then, and so shine: Being thus cloathed, thou shalt shine in Justification, and likewise in Sanctity. What a Privilege is it to be like GOD: A sanctified Conscience, what can be said against it?

AND first, have an enlightened Understanding; for that is the proper Seat of Light. That ignorant Zeal that *Rome* commends, exposes Religion to Scorn and Contempt: Heat without Light, is the Character of the Fire of Hell. I know all are not tied to a like Degree of Knowledge; but certainly all are obliged to have a Competency, and Diligence for Increase: Aspire then to be intelligent Christians, and to know well what you believe: *Let your Minds be filled with Knowledge*, as the Apostle speaks. But let it not stop there, it must have Influence into the Will: True Light conveys Heat. All the Knowledge that the natural Man hath of *Christ*, not warming his Affections to *Christ*; is but *ignis fatuus*, a vain Light; it shall never lead him to Happiness. Saving Light produces Love,

and by that acts. *Faith works by Love*, says the Apostle. That breaks forth and shines in the Life, in Godliness, Righteousness, and Sobriety. Shine then in all these; first in Piety towards God, for this is the Reflection of these Rays of Light back toward their Source; and this will command the other two. No Man that shines in Godliness, will wallow in Injustice and Intemperance: Guile and Wrong cannot endure the Light: They that are unjust cannot shine; and let them never offer to shine among Christians, that are not sober, but stained with Riot and Uncleaness. These foul Enormities lay Waste the Conscience, and put out the Light. How can that pure Spirit, that chose the Likeness of a chaste Dove, dwell, and give Light in that Soul that is a Nest of impure and filthy Lusts? No; there can be no Fellowship betwixt this celestial Light, whereby we should shine, and those infernal Works of Darkness.

LET prophane Men hold it Wit, to scoff at Purity; but you that move Heaven-ward in good Earnest, and mean to shine in Glory, shine here in Holiness: *For without Holiness no Man shall see God.* And do it with these Qualifications.

I. CONSTANTLY in every Estate, let not this Divine Light go out, either by Day, in Prosperity, or by Night, in Adversity: Do not shine clear in every other Place, and be dark in your Chamber. They that do thus, have their Reward. That is a sad Word, if rightly understood, *Beware of Hypocrisy.*

AGAIN, Shine progressively, gaining still more and more Victory over Darkness, 'till you attain unmixed and perfect Light. *The Way of the Just,*
(says

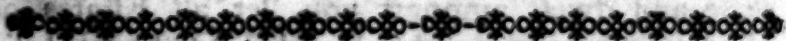
(says Solomon) *is like the shining Light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect Day, Prov. iv. 18.*

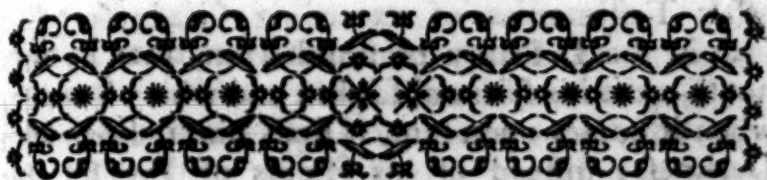
LASTLY, Shine humbly to his Glory, whose Light you borrow, not to shew forth your own Excellencies, but His, *who hath called you from Darknes to his marvellous Light, 1 Pet. ii. 9.* If we be Children of Light, our Brightness must praise the Father of Lights: *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they seeing your good Works, (not yourselves, if you can be hid; as the Sun affords its Light, and will scarce suffer us to look upon itself) may glorify (not you, but) your heavenly Father.*

To conclude, The pure Light of the Church is revived, *and the Glory of the LORD is risen upon you,* and upon this Glory there shall be a Defence: If GOD be your Glory in the Midst of you, He will be likewise a Wall of Fire round about you. All the Danger is, if we fall short in the Duty of Shining. As you desire then that this Glory should abide and dwell amongst you, let all Estates of Men provoke one another to shine bright in Holiness: You who either by Birth or Office are in eminent Station, know that you were set there to be eminent and exemplary in Shining, as Stars of more notable Magnitude: You who are Ministers of this Light, know that *you are the Light of the World, and if the very Light become Darknes, how great will that Darknes be?* You that are of a lower Order, know that you must shine too; for it is a common Duty. There is a certain Company of small Stars in the Firmament, which though they cannot be each one severally seen; yet, being many, their united Light makes a conspicuous Brightness in the Heaven, which is called the milky Way: So though the Shining of every private Christian is not so much severally remarkable, yet the Concourse

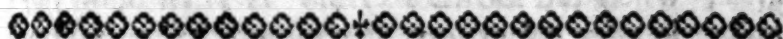
and Meeting of their Light together, will make a bright Path of Holiness in the Church.

Now to the End we may each one shine in our Measure, we must learn to turn ourselves often towards Him from whom our Light is derived: Con- versing with Him will make us more and more like Him. There is an unknown Virtue for this Pur- pose in secret Prayer and Meditation: Were we more in the Mount with GOD, our Faces would shine more with Men. Let us then rescue from the World all the Time we can, to resort frequent- ly thither, 'till the Soul, which is now often pulled down again by the Flesh, shall let that Mantle fall, and come down no more; *but shine there without Spot, and be for ever satisfied with her Maker's Image.*





S E R M O N V.



ISAIAH lx. 1.

*Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the
Glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.*

TRULY, *Light is sweet, and it is a pleasing
Thing to behold the Sun,* says the Preacher,
Eccles. xi. 7. But the Interchange of Night
with Day, adds to its Beauty. And the longest
Night makes Day the welcomest; as that People
well know, whose Situation in the World gives
them a five or six Months Night all of one Piece.
It is reported of some of them, That when they
conceive their Night draws towards an End, they
put on their richest Apparel, and climb up to the
highest Mountains, with Emulation, who shall
first discover the returning Light; which, so soon

as it appears, they salute, with Acclamations of Joy, and welcome it with solemn Feasting, and all other Testimonies of exceeding Gladness. But such is the Lethargy of sinful Man, that he stirs not to meet his spiritual Light; and which is worse, when it comes upon him, it finds him in Love with Darkness; instead of his Shouts of Joy for this Light, many a Cry must be sounded in his Ears, to awaken him, and it is well too, if at length, he hear and obey this Voice, *Arise, shine, for thy Light is come.* It is clear that the Words contain a Command, and the Reason of it: The Command to a twofold Act, The Reason under two Expressions. Good Reason the Church should arise, when the LORD's Glory is risen upon her; and it is very congruous she should be enlightned and shine when her Light is come. Of those two Acts or Duties, somewhat was formerly spoken, and the Reason, likewise, was made Use of so far, as relative to those Duties, and tending to their Inforcement. It will be now expedient to consider, simply in themselves these latter Words: *Thy Light is come, and the Glory of the LORD is risen upon thee.*

So far as this Prophecy hath respect to the Reduction of the *Jews*, from the *Babylonish* Captivity; that Temporal Deliverance, was their Light, and that Divine Power by which it was effected, was this Glory of the LORD. And Indeed, both these Expressions are frequently used, in such a Sense in Holy Writ: But this literal Sense is but a Step to elevate the Prophet to a Sight of *Christ's* Spiritual Kingdom, which is usual with him, as our Saviour Himself testifies, of another of his Prophecies. These Things, said *Esaias*, when he saw his Glory, and spoke of Him, *John xii. 41.*

IN these Words, there are three Things, concerning *Christ*, represented to the Church's view. First his Beauty and Excellency, in that he is called *Light*, and *the Glory of the LORD*. Secondly, The Church's Propriety and Interest in Him, *Thy Light*, and *risen upon thee*, which hath an Emphasis, as the very next Verse doth clearly manifest; as He is *originally the Glory of the LORD*, and the Light of the LORD, so He is *Communicatively* the Church's Light and her Glory too, as it is express'd in the 19th Verse of this same Chapter, *Thy GOD, thy Glory*. Thus hath she both his Worth, and her own Right, in Him, to consider. Thirdly, His Presence, or her actual Possession, *He is come, and is risen*; and in these the Church, and each faithful Soul, may find a double Spring of Affection, the one of Love, the other of Joy: The transcendent Beauty of Christ makes Him the choice Object of Love, and her Property, in Him, or Title to Him, together with Possession, is the proper Cause of solid Joy.

FIRST then, this Excellency is expressed by these two Characters, *Light*, and *the Glory of the LORD*. Concerning which, it will be fit both to demonstrate that they are the proper Titles of *Christ*, and also, to shew what they signify.

INDEED, the Apostle in his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, Chapter 3, insists much in extolling both the Light and the Glory of the Gospel. And in the 4th Verse of the next Chapter, speaks of the Light of the glorious Gospel, but he immediately intimates whence it hath this Light and Glory; *the glorious Gospel of Christ*, says he, *who is the Image of GOD*: So that it is unnecessary to enquire whether the Messiah, or the Word that reveals Him, be rather here couched under these
Terms

of *Light* and the *Glory of the LORD*. These two agree so well together, and these Words agree so well to them both, that it were an Injury to attempt to sever them: All the Difference will be this, *Christ* is that incomplex and substantial *Light*, The Gospel that complex *Light*, wherein He appears; but (not to be guilty of *dark Terms*, especially in a Discourse of *Light*) I take it in this Resemblance, *Christ* is the Sun, and the Gospel his proper Sphere, or Heaven, wherein He gives *Light* to his Church; He is primarily the *Glory of the LORD*, and the Gospel by Participation, because it declares Him, so that much of that which shall be spoken here of *Christ*, will be secondarily to be understood of the Gospel.

THAT *Christ* is *Light*, the Scripture speaks abundantly; his own Voice, concerning Himself, (notwithstanding the Cavil of the Pharisees) is above all Exception, for He is Truth itself. *I am the Light of the World*, saith He, *he that follows Me shall not walk in Darkness*, John viii. 12. The Father that sent Him gives Him the same Title, *I will give Thee for a Light of the Gentiles*, Isaiah xlii. 6. And not to multiply Citations of the Prophets and Evangelists, who with one Consent all magnify this *Light*, take the true Testimony of a false Prophet, (and indeed, the favourable Witness of any Adversary is strongest.) It is that of *Balaam*, who saw that *Christ* was *Light*, though (because he saw Him afar off (as he says himself) and had not his Eye fortified, like the true Prophets) he discerned Him but as a Star. *There shall come a Star out of Jacob*, Numb. xxiv. 17. But what Need we go so far, to be certified what this *Light* and *Glory of the LORD* is; seeing the very next Verse to the Text assures us of it? *Upon Thee shall the LORD arise*. And in the 19th Verse, *The*

The LORD shall be thy everlasting Light, and thy God thy Glory.

By this Time, I hope it is clear, That the Eternal Son of GOD, co-essential with his Father, was He that gave Accomplishment to this Prophecy, by appearing to the World wrapt up in the Darkness of human Nature. He is *that Day-spring from on high that hath visited us*, as old Zacharias speaks, *Luke i. 78.*

AMONG all created Excellencies, none can be borrowed, more fitly representing *Christ* than that of Light. And is it not *Christ* that decks his Church with supernatural Beauty? But the manifold Agreement of Light with *Christ*, doth require more particular Consideration.

LIGHT is the first Object of Sight. And *Jesus Christ*, whom the Apostle styles GOD *over all, blessed for ever*, is, the Prime Object of the Understanding: What is then become of that Divine Sparkle, that understanding Soul, that the Father of Spirits breathed into these Bodies, that all our Thoughts creep here below, and leave their noblest Object inconsidered? Which of us may not complain (though few of us do) that our Souls have either no Wings to elevate them to the Contemplation of Him, from whom they issued, or if they make Offers at it, our Affections, engaged to the World, make us, like a Bird tied by the Foot, fall presently down again? It is high Time to leave hunting Shadows, and to turn our internal Eye to the beholding of this uncreated Light.

In this elementary World, Light being the first Visible, all Things are seen by it, and it by itself.
Thus

Thus is *Christ*, among Spiritual Things, in the elect World of his Church; *all Things are made manifest by the Light*, says the Apostle, *Eph. v. 13.* speaking of *Christ*, as the following Verse doth evidently testify. It is in his Word, that He shines and makes it a directing and convincing Light, to discover all Things that concern his Church and Himself, to be known by its own Brightness; how impertinent then is that Question so much tossed by the *Romish Church*? How know you the Scriptures (say they) to be the Word of God, without the Testimony of the Church? I would ask one of them again, How they can know that it is Day-light, except some light a Candle to let them see it? They are little versed in Holy Scripture, that know not that it is frequently called *Light*; and they are senseless that know not that Light is seen and known by itself. *If our Gospel be hid*, says the Apostle, *it is hid to them that perish; the GOD of this World having blinded their Minds against the Light of the glorious Gospel.* No Wonder if such stand in Need of a Testimony. A blind Man knows not that it is light at Noon-day, but by report. But to those that have Eyes, Light is seen by itself.

AGAIN, it makes all other Things that are in the World to become actually visible (as they speak;) so by this substantial Word, *Jesus Christ*, all Things in Religion are tried and discovered. Doctrines, and Worship, must be tried by this Light; and what will not endure this Trial, must not be endured in the House of God. *To the Law and to the Testimony* (says the Prophet;) *if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them*, Isaiah viii. 20. The Rays of *Christ's* Light are displayed thro' both his Testaments, and in them we see Him.

BUT

BUT oh! How sublime is the Knowledge of Him: None is ignorant that there is Light, yet what Light is, few know; the best Wits are troubled to define it: So all that bear the Name of Christians, acknowledge that *Christ* is, but to know what He is, is of marvellous Difficulty: In a speculative Way, unfindable is the Depth of his Nature and Properties, and his Generation who can declare? I define not whether his eternal Generation, or his Incarnation in Time. These are Mysteries that shall hold the very Angels busy in Admiration for ever, and for experimental Knowledge by Faith, how small is the Number of those that are truly acquainted with it?

AGAIN, Light fitly resembles *Christ* in Purity, it visits many impure Places, and Lights upon the basest Parts of the Earth, and yet remains pure and undefiled; *Christ* sees and takes Notice of all the Enormities, and sinful Pollutions in the World (as *David* says of the Sun, *Psal. xix.*) *there is nothing hid from his Beams*; yea many of those foul Evils He cures, and purgeth away these Pollutions, and yet is never stained by them in the least Degree; He is a Physician not capable of Infection, and therefore while He dwelt among Men, He shunned not Publicans and Sinners, but sought them rather; for with such was his Business and Employment. Indeed for a frail Man to be too bold in frequenting prophane and obstinate Persons, though with Intention to reclaim them, is not always so safe. They may pull him in, that would help them forth, and pollute him that would cleanse them. But our Saviour, the Light of the World, runs no such hazard; he is stronger than the perversett sinner, yea than the Prince of darkness himself, over whom his Banners are always

victorious, and purer than to be in danger of pollution; his precious Blood is a Fountain opened for Sin and Uncleanness, Sinners are purified by it, and it is not defiled by them; Thousands have wash'd in it, yet it shall abide, and always shall be most perfectly pure: *And such a High Priest was needful for us, ~~unpolluted~~ undefiled*; and though conversant with Sinners, to communicate to them his Goodness, yet *separate from Sinners in Immunity from their evil.*

To this agrees well that Title, the Prophet *Malachi* gives Him, when he calls Him the *Sun of Righteousness*, full of Purity, and Righteousness, as the Sun is of Light, all luminous, without Spot, subject to no Eclipse in Himself, his Light being his own: Though our Sins interposed, may hide Him sometimes from us, as those real Eclipses in the Sun, are rather ours, for we are deprived of Light, but not the Sun. *Christ* is many Ways most fitly called the Sun; for since all created Light falls infinitely short of his Worth, the Prince and Chief of them, the Sun cannot but suit best, so far as may be, to set forth his Excellency.

The Light of the Sun is neither parted nor diminished, by being imparted to many People, and Nations that behold it at one Time; nor is the Righteousness of this Sun of Righteousness either lessened to Himself, or to Believers, by many partaking of it at once; it is wholly conferred upon each of them, and remains whole in Himself. Hence it is, that not only *Christ* invites so liberally Sinners to come to Him, but even justified Persons would so gladly draw all others to lay Hold on this Righteousness of their Redeemer, knowing well, that if all the World were enriched

by it, they themselves would be no whit the poorer.

AGAIN, the Sun hath a vivifying Power, not only of Plants and Vegetables; but if Philosophers be right, it hath a special Influence in the Generation of Man. But this is both more certainly and more eminently true of this Sun we speak of, in Man's Regeneration; that he is the proper and principal Efficient of it. The Evangelist calls him at once, *The Light and the Life of Men*, John i. 4. To say nothing of Him as a Treasure. He is the Source of our spiritual Life and Motion.

WHEN the Sun takes its Course towards us in the Season of the Year, it drives away the sharp Frosts, and the heavy Fogs of Winter, it clears the Heavens, decks the Earth with Variety of Plants and Flowers, and awakes the Birds to the pleasant Strains of their natural Musick. When *Christ*, after a Kind of Winter, returns to visit a declining Church, admirable is the Change that he produces; all begins to flourish by his sweet Influence, his House, his Worship; his People are all cloathed with a new Beauty, but it is spiritual, and therefore none but spiritual Eyes can discern it. When He will thus return, all the Power and Policy of Man can no more hinder Him, than it could stay the Course of the Sun in its Circle. In like Manner, a Soul, that can do nothing but languish and droop, while *Christ* withdraws himself, what inexpressible Vigour and Alacrity finds it at his returning? Then those Graces, that seemed to have been lost, bud forth anew, with a pleasant Colour and fragrant Smell. It is the Light of his Countenance that banisheth their false Fears, that strengthens their Faith, and cures their

spiritual Infirmities. This Sun is indeed the sovereign Physician: *Unto you that fear my Name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with Healing under his Wings, Mal. iv. 2.*

FINALLY, All Darkness flees away before Him; it was his arising in the World, that made the Day break, and the Shadows flee away. The Types and Shadows of the Law were then abolished. It was his Light that dispelled the Mists of Ignorance and Idolatry, and He alone delivers the Soul from the Night of Sin and Misery: All the Stars, and the Moon with them, cannot make it Day in the World, this is the Sun's Peculiar. Nor can Nature's highest Light, the most refined Science and Morality, make it Day in the Soul; for this is *Christ's*.

THE common Light of Reason and Conscience every Man that comes into the World, hath from Him as his Creator, but the special Light of Faith, they alone that are born again, have from Him as their Saviour. Gross is the Darkness of every natural Mind, 'till *Christ* enlighten it. It can neither discern, nor receive the Things of GOD. *We were Darkness* (says the Apostle) *but now are you Light in the LORD.* It is nothing else but a Mass of Darkness, and the Companion of Darkness is Confusion: As it was in the Mass of the World before Light was Created. And what is there under Heaven more confused than a carnal Mind? The Affections quite out of Order, and though all evil, yet fighting one with another, and continually hurrying the Judgment whither they please: Now to dissipate this Darkness, and remedy this Confusion, *Christ* shines externally in his Word, but too much daily Experience testifies, that this is not sufficient. Therefore to those whom

whom He makes Children of the Light, to meet with this outward Light of his Word, He gives another internal, by the Spirit. The Sun can make dark Things clear, but it cannot make a blind Man see them. But herein is the Excellency of this Sun, that He illuminates not only the Object, but the Faculty; doth not only reveal the Mysteries of his Kingdom, but opens blind Eyes to behold them; and the first Lineament of the renewed Image of God in Man, is that Light in the Understanding, removing not only that simple Ignorance of Divine Things, but these Misconceits likewise, and false Principles, and that wicked Pertinacy, whereof Man's Mind is naturally full. He that at first commanded Light to shine out of Darkness, infuseth Saving-Knowledge and Light, into the dark Soul of Man. and this Light kindles Love. It hath a powerful Influence begetting Heat in the Affections. And this Divine Light conducts the Soul that hath received it, till it be received to the Land of Light and perfect Happiness. Thus in our Redeemer is *the Fountain of Life*, as the Psalmist speaks, *And in his Light do we see Light*, Psal. xxxvi. 9.

HE is likewise here stiled, *The Glory of the LORD*. The Ark of God was called the glory: It enjoyed that Name as a Type of *Christ*, in whom that which the Ark contained was fulfilled. The Tabernacle is called *the Dwelling of God's Glory*. Typifying Him in the Tabernacle, in whose human Nature that Glory dwells far more excellently. *John i. 14* *ἐκείνη ἡ δόξα ἐν ᾧ ἔκειτο, ἡ δόξα ὡς ἡ δόξα τοῦ πατρὸς, ἡ δόξα ὡς ἡ δόξα τοῦ πατρὸς, ἡ δόξα ὡς ἡ δόξα τοῦ πατρὸς*, He dwelt in a Tabernacle among us, and we saw his Glory as the Glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of Grace and Truth. The Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls Him, *the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the Character of his Person*. And

under these Expressions lies that remarkable Mystery of the Son's Eternal Relation to the Father, which is rather humbly to be adored than boldly to be explained. It is true, he is called *the Wisdom of the Father*, but this Wisdom is too wonderful for us; He is called *the Word*, but what this Word means, I think we shall not well know, 'till we see Him Face to Face; and contemplate him in the Light of Glory. Mean while we may see Him, to be the Glory of the LORD in a sufficient Measure to guide us on to that clear Vision reserved above for us. *We saw his Glory*, says that sublime Evangelist. But how could this excellent Glory be seen by sinful Men, and not astonish and strike dead the beholders? He, *was made Flesh and dwelt among us* (says he) and we saw his Glory. That Majesty that we could never have looked upon, He veiled with human Flesh, that we might not die, yea live, by seeing Him. There He stood behind the Wall, and shewed himself through the Trellis; *In Him dwelt the Fulness of the Godhead*, Col. ii. 9. but it was *bodily*. For who could have endured the Splendor of the Godhead's Fulness, if that Cloud of his Body had not been drawn betwixt? And through it did shine that Grace and Truth, that Wisdom and Power in the Work of our Redemption, whereby He was clearly manifested to be the Glory of the LORD.

SURELY we need not now ask the Church, or a believing Soul, what is her Beloved more than another? Or if we do, well may she answer, *He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely*. For He is the Light of the World, and the Glory of the LORD. Let not the numerous Titles of Earthly Potentates be once admitted into Comparison with these. If we believe *David*, the stateliest Things and Persons in the World being ballanced

ballanced with Vanity itself, are found lighter than it; And shall we offer to weigh them with *Christ*? If we knew Him rightly, we would not sell the least Glance or Beam of this Light of his Countenance, for the highest Favour of mortal Men, though it were constant and unchangeable (which it is not;) it is Ignorance of *Christ* that maintains the Credit of those Vanities we admire: The Christian that is truly acquainted with Him, enamoured with the Brightness of his Beauty, can generously trample upon the Smilings of the World with the one Foot, and her Frownings with the other; if he be rich or honourable, or both, yet he glories not in that, but *Christ* who is the Glory of the LORD, is even then his chief Glory. And the Light of *Christ* obscures that worldly Splendor in his Estimation; and as the Enjoyment of *Christ* overtops all his other Joys, so it overcomes his Griefs, as that great Light drowns the Light of Prosperity, so it shines bright in the Darknes of Affliction; no Dungeon so close that can keep out the Rays of *Christ's* Love from his beloved Prisoners. The World can no more take away this Light, than it can give it. And as this Light is a Comfort, so it is likewise a Defence, that suffers no more of Distress to come near the Godly, than is profitable for them: Therefore we find very frequently in Scripture, where this Light and Glory is mentioned, Protection and Safety jointly spoken of.

THE LORD is my Light, and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? says David, Psal. xxvii. 1. The LORD is a Sun, and He is a Shie'd too, Psal. lxxxiv. 11. And truly I think him Shot-proof, that hath the Sun for his Buckler. And for Glory; Upon all the Glory shall be a Defence, says our Prophet in his 4th Chapter, 5th Verse. And the Prophet, where

where he calls the LORD the Church's *Glory in the midst of her*, he calls him likewise a *Wall of Fire round about her*, Zach. ii. 5. The only Way then to be safe, is to keep this Light, and this Glory intire; to part with any Part of this Glory, is to make a Breach in that Wall of Fire; and if that be a Means of Safety let all Men judge: No, keep it whole, and then they must come through the Fire that will assault you.

NOR is this Light only defensive of the Church that embraceth it, but likewise destructive of all adverse Powers; see a clear Testimony of this, *Isaiab, x. 17, 18. And the Light of Israel shall be for a Fire, and his Holy One for a Flame (speaking there of the Assyrians) and it shall burn and devour his Thorns and his Briers in one Day, and shall consume the Glory of his Forest, and of his fruitful Field, and they shall be as when a Standard-Bearer fainteth.*

LET then the Church of GOD entirely observe this Light and Glory of the LORD, and she shall undoubtedly be preserved by it. But to close in a Word, first to those that know this Light, and then to those that are yet Strangers to it.

YOU who know *Christ*, glory in Him perpetually; well may He be your Glory, when He is the Glory of the LORD: There are some that pretend Love to *Christ*, and yet a taunting Word of some profane Miscreant, will almost make them ashamed of Him; how would they die for *Christ* that are so tender as not to endure a Scoff for Him? Where is that Spirit of *Moses*, that accounted the very Reproach of *Christ* greater Riches than the Treasures of *Egypt*? O learn to glory in *Christ*, think highly of Him, and speak so too.

Methinks

Methinks it is the Discourse in the World becomes Christians best, to be speaking one to another honourably of *Jesus Christ*: And of all Men, the Preachers of his Gospel should be most frequent in this Subject. This should be their great Theme to extol and commend the LORD JESUS, that they may enflame many Hearts with his Love; and best can they do this, who are most strongly taken with this Love themselves: Such will most gladly abase themselves, that *Christ* may be magnified: and whatsoever be their Excellencies, they still account *Christ* their Glory, and they are richly repayed, for He accounts them his Glory; this would seem a strange Word, if it were not the Apostle's. *They are the Messengers of the Churches, and the Glory of Christ*, 2 Cor. viii. 23. Delight who will either in Sloth and Ignorance on the one Hand, or in vain Speculations and frothy Wit on the other: Surely those Preachers shall only be approved in the great Day, who have constantly endeavoured in their Measure, to speak the best they could for their Master's Advantage: And happy those Christians, of what Estate soever, that in all Estates make *Christ* their Glory, and in all Actions have their Eye fixed upon his Glory, who is their Light and the Glory of the LORD.

Now to those that are Strangers to Him (would to GOD none that are to be spoken to, were such,) to them I say, Notice would be given both of the Excellency and Necessity of *Christ*. Though it were possibly to grope the way to Happiness in the Dark; yet, none will deny but to be conducted thither by a constant Light, is both more safe and more delightful. But were there any Possibility to attain that End without this Light, the Neglect of it were not altogether so strange. The Wonder
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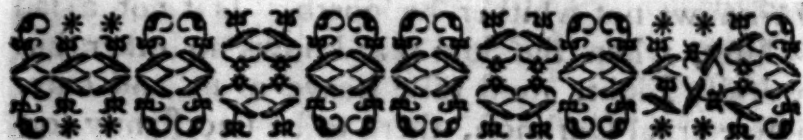
of all is this, That *Christ* alone being both that Life, and the Way to it, and the Truth or Light that guides in that Way, yet Christians (so called) should esteem and look after Him as little, as if He were wholly needless: What meanest thou, O besotted Sinner! Is it so light a Thing to die in thy Sins, and eternally for them, that thou wilt not so much as open and admit the Light of Salvation? What wilt thou pretend in that terrible Day? Though all other Kind of People should offer some Excuse, thou who hast heard the Gospel, shall be speechless: For not only the Rigour of Justice shall condemn thee, but Mercy itself shall plead against thee, for thou hast despised it. That Light did come and was not embraced, shall be thy main Condemnation. How many thousands that make no Doubt of Heaven, yet shall then fall short of it? It is not a superficial Profession that will then pass current. It is not some Sighs and Groans from an unsanctified Heart, which either come from Custom or some present Touch of the Word: Nor yet is it some sudden Risings of inward Affection towards *Christ* upon the Report of his Worth, that shall then serve the Turn. The intellectual Knowledge of *Christ*, the distinct Understanding; yea the orthodox Preaching of his Gospel; the maintaining of his publick Cause, and suffering for it, shall not then be found sufficient. Only that peculiar Apprehension of *Christ*, those constant Flames of spiritual Love, that even Course of holy Walking in his Light shall be the Characters, whereby *Christ* shall own his Children, and admit them into the Inheritance of perfect Light. One of the Speakers in the Book of *Jeh*, discoursing of the Prosperity of the Ungodly calls it, but his Candle, and tells how long it can last. *His Candle* (says he) *shall be put out with him*, and that is the longest Term of it. If it last his Life-time,

it

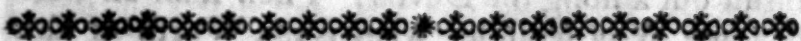
it shall convey him no further, he goes into Eternity in the Dark; and therefore, as St. *John* says, he knows not whither he goeth. Is it not a sad Thing, when the Soul that knows no other but worldly Light, must take Leave of it, and enter into eternal Darkness, there to be unceasingly tormented with present Anguish, and the frightful Expectation of the last Judgment; where it must take again that Body which was the Accomplice of its Wickedness, to be Partaker of its Punishment? Where it shall have a double Misery to behold Crowns of Immortality distributed to the Godly, after the short Combats of this Life, and itself thrust out among the Devils? Then shall all Men be some Way sensible, what is the Worth of this now contemned Light, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the greatest Number too late, for they shall be banished from it for ever; but the Righteous shall then most perfectly know, and for ever enjoy this Light, and Glory of the LORD. *To whom with the Father of Lights and Spirit of Grace, be an Eternity of Praise and Honour.*



SER-



S E R M O N VI.



CANT. i. 3.

*Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments,
thy Name is as Ointment poured forth;
therefore do the Virgins love Thee.*

THE natural Workings and Desires of Things are agreeable to their Being. The Beasts according to their sensitive Life seek those Things that tend to the Preservation of that Life, and affect nothing higher than those, and they are satisfied. Man, (except such as are in the lowest Stage and Border upon the Beasts) find Nature, even corrupt Nature, raising him to higher Desires and Designs. And yet of the best of them, the Apostle's Maxim holds true, *They that are after the Flesh, mind the Things of the Flesh.* But he subjoins, the Excellency of some Men beyond the best Naturalist, *They that are after the Spirit, the Things*

Things of the Spirit, Rom. viii. 5. They must be confined to Things natural, but are strongly moved towards spiritual Blessings, and *Christ* the Sum of them. And having once tasted of his Sweetness, of the Savour of thy good Ointments; they can admit nothing into Competition with his Love, and this it is that lies under these Words.

NUMBERS have been his Guests at this Time, and the greatest Number think they came to good Purpose; but know that you are so far from partaking of *Christ* in the Sacrament, that you have not so much as smelt his Perfumes; if you be not strongly taken with his Love. Great are the Praises, and many the Duties you owe Him for so rich Favours; and shew therefore your Good-Will, and endeavour some Payment. But know that none of them are current except they be stamp'd with Love; if you love not, you do nothing, all your Labours and Services without it, are as so many Cyphers: And with it the meanest of them will find Acceptance.

You have briefly in the Words, *Christ's Loveliness*, and *the Christian's Love*; the former the Cause of the latter, both couched under borrowed Terms, according to the whole Strain of this allegorical Song, to which the true experimental Knowledge of this Love is the best Commentary.

IN all Love, three Things are necessary: (1) Some Goodness in the Object, either true and real, or apparent and seeming to be so; for the Soul, be it never so evil, can affect nothing but what it takes some Way to be good. (2) There must be a Knowledge of that Goodness; for the most excellent Things, if altogether unknown, affect not.

(3) There must be a Suitableness or Agreement of that good Thing with the Nature of those which should affect it; otherwise how good soever it is, it is not good to them.

Now all these we have clearly in this Love. (1) The Goodness, the Excellency of *Christ* expressed by *precious Ointments*. (2) The Manifestation and making it known, signified by *the pouring forth of his Name*. (3) His Fitness, and Congruity with them here mentioned, under this Denomination *Virgins*; such as have the Senses of their Souls, not stop'd with the Pollutions of the World, but pure and active, and *exercised to discern Good and Evil*; these three Requisites thus met, must needs produce Love. *Therefore do the Virgins love Thee.*

Because of the Savour of thy good Ointments.] How true is the Apostle's Word, when he calls *Christ* the Believers *All Things*, and that radical Grace of Faith, because it apprehends *Christ* hath a Kind of Universality; and it is reasonable too, it alone being to the Soul, what all the five Senses are to the Body. It is the Eye and the Mouth, a wonderful Eye; *It sees Him that is invisible*, Heb. xi. 27. The Mouth. *It tastes that the LORD is gracious*, 1 Pet. ii. 3. Yea, take these both together in one Place, *Psal. xxxiv. 8. O taste and see that the LORD is good.* It is the Soul's Ear, for what else is meant, when it is said, *He that hath an Ear to hear let him hear*; and was it not that Touch which *Christ* took special Notice of, and with good Reason distinguished from the common Touch of the Multitude that was crowding about Him; that Touch alone draws Virtue from Him, *Some hath touched Me, for there is Virtue gone out of Me.* And lastly, as it is all those other Senses, and *Christ*

its Object in Reference to them all; so here in it Smelling, it finds the Savour of his fragrant Graces, and by that works Love.

WHAT strange Odds is there betwixt the Opinion of *Christ's* Spouse, and the World, that knows Him not? They wonder what she sees in Him desirable; she wonders that they are not all ravish'd with his Excellencies. They prefer the basest Vanities in the World before Him; she finds the choicest and richest Things in the World too mean to resemble the smallest Part of his Worth. See in this Song how busily and skillfully she goes to all the Creatures, and crops the rarest Pieces in Nature and Art to set forth her Well-Beloved, and seems to find them all too poor for her Purpose; one while, she extols Him above all Things beautiful, and pleasant to the Eye. Another while above Things delectable to the Taste, as in the former Verse, *Thy Loves are better than Wine*, and here prefers the Perfume of his Graces to the most precious Ointments.

WHEN a natural Eye looks upon the Sacrament of the LORD's Supper, it finds it a bare and mean Kind of Ceremony. Take Heed there be not many, that come to it, and partake of it with others that prize it little, and do indeed find as little in it as they look for. But oh! What precious Consolation doth a Believer meet with at this Banquet; how richly is the Table furnish'd to his Eye; what plentiful Varieties employ his Hand and Taste? What abundance of rare Dainties? Yet there is nothing but one here, but, that one is all Things to the believing Soul. It finds his Love is sweeter than the richest Wine to the Taste, or best Odours to the Smell; and that delightful Word of his,

Thy Sins are forgiven thee, is the only Musick to a distressed Conscience.

Thy good Ointments.] THE holy Ointment of the Sanctuary under the Law was composed according to GOD's own Prescription, *Exod. xxx. 25.* And they were straitly forbid to imitate it, or make any like it, to signify the singular Holiness, the matchless Worth of the anointing Oil of Gladness, wherewith our High Priest the LORD JESUS, was anointed above his Fellows. And in this He is incomparable, that his Ointment He hath not from without. It was his own Divine Nature that perfumed his Manhood with these precious Ointments. GOD and the Spirit of the LORD, is said to have anointed Him. *Psal. xlv. 7. Thou lovest Righteousness and hatest Wickedness: Therefore GOD, thy GOD hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy Fellows;* and *Isaiah lxi. 1. The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good Tidings unto the Meek.* But know that that Spirit, and the Father are one in Essence with the eternal Son. In that mystical Song much like to this, in the 45th Psalm at the 8th Verse, it is said, *that his Garments smell of Myrrh, and Aloes, and Cassia as He comes forth of his Ivory Palaces:* When He came down from above to dwell among Men, He apparell'd Himself like them; He was cloathed with human Flesh. But yet that Vesture was so transcendently enriched with all Graces as with costly Perfumes, that Men might easily know there was more under them than a meer Man, yea even in that low Estate did such Beams of his Glory shine through, that thou whose Eyes were open, did clearly behold them, and knew Him to be no less than the only begotten Son of GOD, by this, that *He was so full of Grace and Truth,* John i. 14. And these are in

in a Word, these precious Ointments, whose delightful smell is here commended.

Now to enumerate and describe these Graces, what Tongue of Men, yea or of Angels were sufficient? What other is the main Subject of the whole Scriptures? What mean all the Figures, and Ceremonies of the Law; the costly Furniture and Ornaments of the Temple; the rich Vestments of the High Priest; that fine Linnen, that Silk and Gold, these Gems and precious Stones? Was any of them, were they all any other but Shadows and dim Resemblances of the matchless Perfections of *Jesus Christ*? It is strange, that Christians have so low Conceits of their high Redeemer! What is the Gospel, but a more clear and plentiful pouring forth of those Ointments? What was the great Labour and Business of the Holy Apostles, but the diffusing of *Christ's* Grace through the World? *I determined to know nothing among you save Christ and Him Crucified*, says St. Paul to his *Corinthians*. What was that other Sacrament and this, but Converts under which *Christ* conveys Himself and his Graces to the Believing Soul, while the profane and slight hearted Receivers are sent away with empty Elements? Thus you see how ample a Subject these Graces are in the general. And truly the Consideration of any one Particular of them might be the Employment of many Hours. Would you have the Wisdom of *Christ*; look what the Apostle says of it, *Col. ii. 3. In Him are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge*. Not some Drops of Wisdom, no, nor Streams, but a Fountain. A Treasure, not one Treasure, but Treasures; many, yea, all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, yet not obvious to every Eye, but, as Treasures, are hid. The Children of Wisdom, which are the World's Fools, have

some Knowledge of this his Wisdom, and draw from it for their own Use; but to sound the Depth of it, who can be able?

No less admirable is his Holiness. He is both the Immaculate Lamb, and the Undeiled Sacrifice, such a High Priest became us: *Became us!* Yes, *Holy, Harmless and Undeiled*, Heb. vii. 26. The more we were deiled with Sin, the more stood we in need of an undeiled and spotless High Priest; it was as expedient, that He should be unlike us in that, as that He should be like us in all other Things. Therefore, as for the legal Priesthood, there was a holy consecrating Oil, this Immortal High Priest was anointed with most entire and compleat Holiness; and this perfect Holiness of his, is set forth as Myrrh, the best Ointments and Spices. Myrrh is of a Virtue preservative from Corruption. He was not only of excellent Smell, while He lived among Men, but this Myrrh did likewise preserve and exempt Him from contracting any Corruption or Pollution, by the bad Air of sinful Company; so that he conversed with Sinners, that He might Convert them without any danger of Infection. And as He was thus extraordinarily anointed with the Spirit of Wisdom and Holiness, so likewise with the Spirit of Meekness, therefore called *The Lamb of God*: His *Voice was not heard in the Streets*. And take in that other Grace, which He Himself mentions, together with his Meekness, as being near in Nature to it, *Humility*; *Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart*, Matt. xi. 29. Indeed, Humility is an odoriferous Grace, and adds a Kind of Sweetness and Lustre to all other Graces. As Balsam, which is the chief of precious Ointments, used to be tried, and that is the truest and best, put into any Liquor, which goes to the Bottom, that but slight which swims above,

above, so these Graces are most upright, that are accompanied with most Humility. And that this may be out of Doubt, you know that *Christ* (of whom we now speak) as He had most Grace, so was He most exemplary in Humility; and certainly, the sweet Smell of this good Ointment, did fill the whole House, when He wash'd his Disciples Feet; as it is said of the Ointment that *Mary* poured upon his Feet, in the foregoing Chapter, *John* xii.

AMONGST many other of his gracious Qualities that might be mentioned, we cannot but take particular Notice of his Love; the rather, because the fragrant Smell of his Graces is here said to beget Love. Now you know that one of the strongest Attractives of Love, is Love, *Magnes amoris amor*. What made Him empty Himself of his Glory, but because He was full of Love? What made Him take on Him the Form of a Servant, suffer Heat and Cold, and Hunger and Poverty, but Love? What other was it made Him digest the Persecutions, Revilings, and the Contradiction of Sinners, but Love? But the great Wonder of his Love is this, He died to become our Life; *who hath loved me, and given Himself for me*, says the great Apostle. And *hereby perceive we the Love of God, because He laid down his Life for us*, says the beloved Apostle. Was it the Nails that held Him fast to the Cross, when they tauntingly bid Him come down? No, it was his Love, that was stronger than Death. But all this was nothing to the angry Countenance of his Father, nor would He ever have ventured upon that, if infinite Love had not persuaded Him; no Wonder if the Apostle calls it a Love that passeth Knowledge. *That you may know*, saith he, *the Love of Christ which passeth Knowledge*, *Eph.* iii. 19. Know it we may, and

and should, but we must know withal, that we cannot know it fully. And this is our Comfort, that it is greater than we can comprehend, for if it were not so, it would be less than we stand in Need of. So much of his Love we may understand, as may abundantly inflame our Hearts with Love to Him; for this Purpose hath He revealed it, and made his Name like an Ointment poured out. And that is the second Thing.

His Name] THAT is the Report and Manifestation of his Excellencies; and if you will take it properly of his Name *Jesus*, and *Christ*, or the *Messiah*, it is true of them; for they are significative of these Excellencies. Ask an afflicted Conscience, if *Jesus*, that is, a Saviour, be not a precious Word, that hath a sovereign Value, both a refreshing Smell, and a healing Virtue? The Hammer of the Law may break a stony Heart in Pieces, but it is only the Blood of *Jesus* that can soften it; and where it is effectually poured, either upon a wounded Soul, it heals it, or upon a hard Heart, it mollifies it. For that other Name, *Christ*, well may it be called an Ointment poured out, for it signifies his Anointing; and that the sweet Savour of this Name may effect, read but that one Passage, *Isa. lxi. 1. The Spirit of the LORD GOD is upon me, because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good Tidings, &c.* What inestimable Riches of Consolation is there in each of these Effects, to which *Christ* was anointed? And yet we find not a Word amongst them all for a proud stiff-necked Sinner. Here are good Tidings, but it is to the meek; comfortable binding up, but it is for the broken-hearted; Liberty, but it is for Captives and Prisoners, groaning under their Chains, and desirous to be delivered; not for such as delight in their Bondage: There is Oil of Joy and Garments of Praise,

Praise, but they are provided for mourning dejected Spirits that need them; not to the Impenitent. On the contrary, there is a terrible Word interjected in the midst of these Promises, *The Day of Vengeance of our GOD*; and that is the Portion of *Christ's Enemies*, and such are all incorrigible Sinners.

THUS it is, at the same Banquet from which you come; one may be filled with spiritual Joy, and the very Person that sits next, be filled with a secret Curse, and return more miserable than he came. But let the lamenting Sinner lift up his Head, and behold *Christ*, the Son of GOD, appointed a *Prophet* to preach Salvation, and Liberty to such; a *Priest* to purchase it, and a *King* to give it.

Now the Pouring out of this Name is divers. Before the Coming of the *Messiah* his Name was poured out in Prophecies and Promises, in Types and legal Ceremonies, but more fully when the *Word was made Flesh*, then Angels and holy Men, yea, and Women, spake clearly of Him. What was his Father's Voice at his Baptism? The Holy Ghost's descending? What was his own Preaching, and Miracles, and Conversation, but all the Pouring forth of his precious Name? And in his Sufferings and Death, what think you? Was not his Name then poured forth, yea, his Blood with it? Yes, truly, being extended on the Cross, and his Body pierced in divers Places; his precious Ointments were shed abroad towards all the Quarters of the World; their Smell both reached Heaven and the visible Earth. GOD the Father (as He was said to do in *Noah's*, Sacrifice) did much more smell in his Sacrifice, a Savour of Rest, appeasing his Wrath, and all Believers a Savour of Peace

Peace, a quieting of their Consciences. And as Aromatick Spices, when they are pounded out and beaten, send forth their sweet Smells most liberally, so in these his Sufferings, did the Obedience, Patience and Love, and all the Graces, and the Name of our Saviour, most clearly manifest themselves to the World.

AFTER he was dead they embalmed his Body, but they knew not that his own Virtue would do more than all the Ointments and Spices in the World could do, not only by preserving his Body from Corruption, but by raising it the third Day. And truly, after his Resurrection, his own Disciples knew his Name better than ever before, and yet more fully after his Ascension, when the Holy Ghost came down upon them, which was poured from Heaven on them, for this very End, That they might pour forth *Christ's* Name to the Earth, *Acts* ii. 8. And they did so, carrying this precious Treasure in earthen Vessels. And ever since, God hath continued the Pouring forth of this Name, by the Ministry and Preaching of the Gospel.

It is true, there are too many of those, that are employed in this Work, that seek themselves, and their own Ends, rather than his Glory. And they that are more upright, are sinful Men, but how mean and unworthy soever, they despise not the Gospel; let the sweet Name, which they pour forth, prevail for itself, that so you may reverence and love it, if you would have Salvation by it; and there is no other Name under Heaven, by which that can be obtained.

As this Name is poured forth in the Gospel preached, so in the Sacraments annexed to it; and particularly

particularly in this, when the Bread is broken, and the Wine poured out. And was not this the earnest Desire of the Receivers of it this Day? (It should have been) to have our Share in it, for the Refreshment and Curing of our Souls? Nor shall any that came thus, be disappointed; and if not presently, yet most certainly, and that in due Time, they shall find the sweet Fruits of it.

You have heard many Ways how the Name of *Christ* is poured out; yet there is one more, without which all the rest are ineffectual: It is this, the secret and powerful Working of the Spirit of God in the Soul. The Ordinances and Means of Salvation, do indeed, pour forth the Name of *Christ* round a Man; but 'till the Spirit concur with them not one Drop falls within the Soul: And is he not so much the more miserable, that hears much of *Christ*, and partakes nothing of Him? Yes, surely, a Man may have much Knowledge of *Christ*, and may understand well, yea may preach well concerning his Worth and Graces, and yet not love Him. But there is a particular Knowledge of Him by the Infusion of the Spirit, and where the smallest Measure of this is, it presently wins the Affection. There is a *shedding abroad of the Love of GOD in our Hearts*, and this draws us after Him. For our Love to GOD is nothing else but the Reflection of his Love to us. So then, though many hear of *Christ*, yet because there are but few that have this Knowledge of Him, therefore it is that so few truly esteem Him, and love Him, and they are such as are here called Virgins: And that is the third Thing.

The Virgins] SIMILITUDE and Conformity of Nature begets Friendship: Pure Affections delight
in

in a pure Object, and make them such; for the Truth is, *Christ* doth not find Men naturally suitable to Himself, but as He took on Him our Nature, so He washeth away the Sefulness of our Nature, and makes it that Way conformable to His; and they that are so changed, though they were formerly Lovers of Sin, yet by Conversion, which is called Regeneration, they are born again; and so become not only chaste, but even Virgins, spiritually; for by Virgins here, are not meant such as *Romish* Votaries fancy them to be: No, this Virginity may well consist with any lawful State of Life.

THESE Virgins are such as be truly holy, and pure in Heart and Life; who though they are not perfectly free from all Sin, yet they have Affection to no Sin: These are singularly delighted with the Smell of *Christ's* Name and Graces, while the voluptuous Person, and the prophane Worldling, dislikes and despises it. The Virgins bestow their Affection whole and entire upon *Christ*.

How grossly do you delude yourselves, that make your Hearts Dens of Pride, filthy Lust, Malice, and Envy, and Thousands of Vanities; and yet think to find a Corner in them to lodge *Christ* too? Truly, you would but straiten Him in Room, and give Him very bad Neighbours. No, they that think not a whole Heart too little for Him, shall never enjoy Him.

The Virgins love Thee] GRACE destroys not the natural Passions of the Soul, but corrects them, by destroying their Corruption; and so they become not only not contrary to Grace, but are made the Subject and Seat of Grace. This of Love, which is the Chief of them, we see it abolisheth not, but rectifies

rectifies it, recalling it to its due Object, and turning it into the right Channel, by which it may empty itself into the Ocean of Goodness.

AND this Love may well consist with the Purity of Virgins, yea, it is this Love that purifies and makes them such. The Virgins love, but whom? *Thee*; and it is as reasonable a Love as it is pure. *Therefore they love Thee*, because Thou hast made them in some Measure apprehensive of thy Worth, which commands the Love of all that know it; not a cold and indifferent Affection, but a superlative ardent Love, far over-topping all their other Desires: And good Reason, since *Christ* doth infinitely, and beyond all Comparison surpass all other Things desirable. Ask your own Hearts, if you love *Christ* thus? For if not thus, you love Him not at all. *St. Paul's* Love was of this Size, *Phil. iii. 7, 8.* *But what Things were Gain to me, those I counted Loss for Christ; yea, doubtless, and I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my LORD, for whom I have suffered the Loss of all Things, and do count them but Dung, that I may win Christ.*

THUS Love will not only undergo Difficulties and Sufferings for *Christ*, without either Repining or Fainting; but it will even be glad to meet with them, as Opportunity is, to exercise and testify itself: Hard Things will seem most easy for his Sake, and bitter Things exceeding sweet. In a Word, to him that loves, scarce any Thing is impossible. Love is the leading Passion of the Soul, all the rest conform themselves to it, Desire, and Hope, and Fear, and Joy, and Sorrow. If then you love *Christ*, the Desires and Breathings of your Soul after Him are strong and earnest, if He withdraw Himself, or appear angry; if either you see Him

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not, or see Him look discontented, your Grief will be so deep that it cannot be allayed by any worldly Employments: Yet upon some former Tokens of his Love, Hope will uphold the Soul, 'till the Beams of his Grace scatter the Cloud, and break through. Though our *Joseph* seem strange, and speak roughly for a while, He cannot long refrain discovering his Affection. Again, love you Him? Unspeakable will be your Joy when He smiles upon you; as great will be your Delight in Possession, as your Desire is in Pursuit: And while you have his Presence, it will be too hard a Task for any Affliction to dismay you. Have you, indeed, heard *Christ* speak comfortably to you this Day at his Holy Table? How will this enable the Soul, and arm it against Dangers and distrustful Fears? *Perfect Love casteth out Fear*, that is, all base and servile Fear; but there is one Fear, that is in no Heart but where Love begets it, *Fear to offend*.

You know how wary and loth Men are to displease those they love: Therefore it is, that Love to *Christ*, and a careful Observing of his Commandments, are inseparable Companions; yea, *Love itself is the fulfilling of the Law*, for it gives up the Heart to God, and consequently the whole Man. Then there is no Return of Duty which your receiving of *Christ* calls for, (and what doth it not call for) there is none (I say) but is comprised under this one of Love. Do you owe Him Praises? Yes, surely; then love Him, that will stir you up to praise Him. You never knew, but where much Love was in the Heart, it made the Tongue ready and active upon all Occasions to praise the Party loved. Love will entertain small Courtesies with great Thanks; much more where the Benefit so far exceeds all possible Thankfulness. Ought you to serve and obey Him? Doubtless He hath

hath for that Purpose redeemed you with his precious Blood. And truly there is no Obedience nor Service so full and so chearful, as that which flows from Love. Should you study Conformity to *Christ*, and labour to be like Him? Yes, for this is to walk worthy of *Christ*; then there is nothing assimilates so much as Love. Men delight in their Society whom they love, and by their Society they insensibly contract their Customs, and become like them. These Virgins that love *Christ* for his Graces, love to converse with Him; and by conversing with Him, they receive of his Graces, and have a Smell of his Perfumes. Not only do they by the Smell of his Garments, obtain the Blessing; but likewise smell like Him, by the Participation of sanctifying Grace; of his Wisdom and Holiness, in a pure and godly Conversation, abstaining from the Lusts and Pollutions of the World: Of his Meekness and Humility; never think that one and the same Soul can have much Pride and much of *Christ*; ever the more Grace a Man hath, the more Sense hath he of his own Unworthiness, and GOD's free Mercy; and consequently, the more Humility.

If you love *Christ*, you cannot choose but be like Him in Love to your Brethren. This is expressly compared, by the Psalmist, to the precious Ointment poured upon *Aaron's* Head, that ran down to the very Skirts of his Garments. Our Head, and High-Priest, the LORD JESUS, hath incomparably testified his Love to Believers, whom He is pleased to call his Brethren; they are far from equalling Him, either in Love to Him, or one to another, but they imitate Him in both. This is his great Commandment, that we love one another, even as He loved us; which is expressed both as a strange Motive, and a high Example. It is not possible that a Spirit of Malice and Hatred can consist with

the Love of *Christ*. Finally, should you be ready to suffer for *Christ*? Yes: Then Love is that which will enable you; and if you were inflamed with this Fire, then, though you burned for Him, that Fire would only consume your Dross, and be soon extinguished, but this would endure for ever.

By these and the like Evidences, try whether you indeed love the LORD *Jesus Christ*. You that profess to love Him, testify the Sincerity of your Love; and be assured, that if you be now found amongst those Virgins that love Him, you shall one Day be of the Number of those Virgins that are spoken of *Rev. xiv. 3, 4.* that sing a new Song before the Throne of GOD.

If you hate the Defilements of the World, and be not polluted with inordinate Affection to the Creature, it shall never repent you to have made Choice of *Christ*: *He shall fill your Hearts with Peace and Joy in Believing.* When you come to his House and Table, He shall send you Home with Joy and sweet Consolation, such as you would not exchange for Crowns and Scepters; and after some few of these running Banquets here below, you shall enter into the great Marriage Supper of the Lamb, where Faith shall end in Sight, and Hope in Possession, and Love continue in perpetual and full Enjoyment; where you shall never be weary, but for ever happy in beholding the Face of the blessed Trinity. *Amen.*

6 JY 64

End of Dr. Leighton's WORKS.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

WORKS

OF

Dr. *ISAAC BARROW*,

Late-Master of Trinity-College, Cambridge.



EXTRACTS

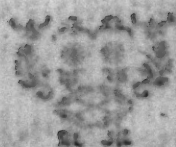
FROM THE

WORKS



Dr. Isaac Newton

Lane Master of Trinity College, Cambridge.



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13

SERMONS

ON

Several Occasions.



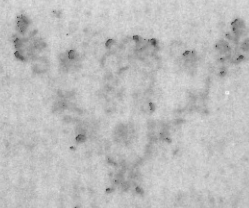
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SERMONS

ON



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S E R M O N I.

Of doing all in the Name of
CHRIST.

COLOSS. iii. 17.

And whatsoever ye do in Word, or in Deed, do
all in the Name of the LORD JESUS.

WHATSOEVER ye do in Word, or Deed: A
Duty we see the Apostle enjoins us of
a large Extent, and therefore surely
of a great Importance; indeed of an
universal Concern; such as must go
along with, must run through all our Words and
all our Actions. We are therefore much obliged,
and much concerned to attend thereto, and to
practise it carefully. But first we must understand
what

what it is; the doing whereof depends upon understanding the Sense of that Phrase (*doing in the Name of Jesus*) being somewhat ambiguous, and capable of divers Meanings; which both in common Use, and in Holy Scripture we find it to bear, different according to the Variety of Matters or Occasions to which it is apply'd; most of which are comprehended, and (as it were) complicated in that general one, according to which we may be said to do that in another Person's Name, which we do with any Kind of Reference or Regard to him; such as our Relations, or our Obligations to that Person require, and the particular Nature of the Action doth admit. And according to this Acceptation I conceive it best to interpret St. Paul's Meaning here, supposing it to comprehend all the more restrained Meanings of this Phrase, truly applicable to the present Matter; of which Meanings I shall propound the chief; and together unfold and inculcate the several Branches of this Duty. Yet first of all rejecting one or two, which cannot well be applied to this Purpose.

To do in another's Name, doth sometimes denote the assuming another's Person, or pretending to be the same with him, the very He. So, *Many shall come in my Name*, (prophefied our Saviour) *saying, I am Christ*: To do thus in *Jesus's* Name, is the Part of an Antichrist. That Sense therefore hath nothing to do here.

AGAIN; To do in another's Name, doth often imply doing in another's Name or Stead, as a Deputy, or Substitute; representing the Person, or supplying the Office of another. So did the Prophets *come, and speak in GOD's Name*; what they declared, or enjoined, being therefore said to be declared and enjoined by GOD Himself: *I spake unto*

unto you, rising up early, and speaking (*viz.* by the Prophets, whom He sent, and who are said to come and speak in his Name). And thus the Apostles spake in *Christ's* Name: *We are Ambassadors for Christ; we pray you in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled.* Thus also Princes govern, and Magistrates execute Justice in *God's* Name; whence they are stiled *Gods*, as being his Lieutenants, administering that Judgment, which belongs originally to Him. Now for this Sense, neither is it so proper here; it agreeing only to some particular Persons, and to some peculiar Actions of them; insomuch, that others presuming to act, according to that Manner, in *Jesus's* Name, shall thereby become Usurpers and Deceivers. We (and to us all this Precept is directed) shall heinously transgress our Duty, doing any Thing thus in his Name, without his Letters of Credence, without being duly by Him authorised thereto.

THESE Senses the present Matter doth not well admit; the rest that suit thereto I shall in Order represent.

I. To do in another's Name sometimes doth signify to do it out of Affection or Honour to another; for another's Sake, because we love or esteem him. Thus it is said, *Whosoever shall give you a Cup of Water to drink in my Name; because ye are Christ's* (that is, out of Respect to *Christ*, because of your Relation to Him) *shall not lose his Reward.* And thus surely we ought to do every Thing in *Jesus's* Name; all our Actions ought to proceed from a Principle of grateful Love, and Reverence towards our gracious Redeemer. *Let all your Actions be done in Charity*, saith the Apostle; if in Charity to our Neighbour, then much more in Love to Him, for whose Sake we are especially

especially bound to love our Neighbour. Upon any Undertaking we should consider, whether that we are going about be apt to please Him, and conducive to his Honour; if so, remembering what He hath done and suffered for us (what excellent Blessings He hath purchased for us, what exceeding Benefits He hath conferred upon us) we should out of Love and Respect to Him readily perform it; but if otherwise, we should, from the same Principles, decline it.

THE Duty is certain, and the Reason thereof evident; for Inducement to the Practice thereof observe St. *Paul's* Example, who thus represents himself in the main Employment of his Life, acting; *The Love of Christ constrains us; judging this, that He died for all, that they who live might not live to themselves, but to Him that died, and rose for them:* The Love of *Christ*, begot and maintained by a Consideration of his great Benefits conferred on him, was the Spring that set St. *Paul* on Work. Thus doing, we shall do in *Jesus's* Name; but if we act out of Love to ourselves (to promote our own Interests, to gratify our own Desires, to procure Credit or Praise to ourselves) we act only in our own Names, and for our own Sakes; not in the Name, or for the Sake of *Jesus*.

II. To do in another's Name implies doing for the Interest or Advantage of another; upon another's Behalf or Account, as the Servants or Factors of another. For, when the Business is another's, and the Benefit emergent belonging to another, he that prosecutes that Business, is commonly supposed to act in another's Name. Thus our Saviour is in St. *John's* Gospel expressed *to come, to speak, to act in God's Name*; because He did God's Business (*the Work which God gave Him*)

Him to accomplish) and entirely *sought the Glory of* GOD, as He there Himself professes. And thus (in Imitation of Him) ought we also to do all Things in his Name; remembering that we *are not our own, but the Servants of* Jesus, (Servants to Him not only by Nature, as to our Maker and Preserver; but by Purchase, as to our Redeemer, who bought us with the greatest Price; and by Compact also, we having freely undertaken his Service, and expecting Wages from Him) that we have therefore no Business properly our own, but that all our Business is to serve Him, and promote his Glory; *Whether we eat, or drink, or whatever we do, we should do all to the Glory of our* LORD. Whatever, I say, we do, we therefore should perform it as to *Jesus*, as his Servants, from Conscience of the Duty we owe to Him; with Intention therein to serve Him, in Expectation of Reward only from Him. So doth St. Paul (in Prosecution of this same Precept) in this Chap. enjoin us, that *whatever we do, we perform it heartily, as to the LORD, and not to Men; knowing (or considering) that from the LORD we shall receive the Recompence of the Inheritance; for that we serve the* LORD CHRIST. In like Manner elsewhere he teaches us to do what we do, *not as Pleasers of Men* (not upon any inferior Account) *but as Servants of Christ, knowing and considering that we have a Master in Heaven.* But,

III. DOING in another's Name, imports frequently doing by the Appoinment and Command, or by the Commission and Authority of another. *By what Power, and in what Name have ye done these Things*, say the High Priests to the Apostles; that is, Who did appoint, or authorize you to do thus? Their Answer was ready; *In the Name of* Jesus; who had sent, commissioned, and com-

manded them to preach, and propagate that Doctrine. And thus we are also bound to do all Things in the Name of *Jesus*, regulating all our Actions by his Law; conforming our whole Lives to his Will; acting, not only out of good Principles (Principles of Love and Conscience) but according to right Rules, the Rules of his Word and Example, which He hath declared and prescribed to us: For what is done beside his Warrant and Will, cannot be rightly esteemed done in his Name; no unjust or impious Action will He upon any Terms countenance or patronize.

It is not prophesying in *Christ's* Name (or preaching about Him) nor frequent Attendance upon those who do so; not speaking much or hearing much concerning Him; it is not having great Gifts or Endowments conferr'd by *Christ* (not even so great as that of working Miracles) it is not familiar Converse with *Christ*, or making frequent Addresses to Him, that can sanctify all a Man's Actions, or so entitle them to the Name of *Christ*, as to secure a Person from being disavowed and rejected by *Christ*; it is only the conforming all our Actions to his holy Laws, that will be accepted and acknowledged by Him.

THIS I could wish they would consider, who seem, by such Pretences, to commend or excuse their Actions, altho' plainly contrary to the Laws of *Christ*; such as those of being meek and charitable towards all Men; living peaceably ourselves, and endeavouring to promote Peace among others; paying Reverence and Obedience to Superiors; and the like Laws of *Christ*, not only express and manifest, but even of the highest Rank and Consequence among them, being mainly conducing to that which our LORD especially renders the publick

lick Welfare of Mankind ; the Violation whereof cannot be justified by pretending any special Regard whatever to *Christ*, or any Performances done, whether truly or seemingly, in his Name. We do but deceive ourselves, if we conceit, that because we think much, or speak much of *Jesus*, or have a Zeal for something good, all our Actions are done in his Name ; No, it only can warrant and sanctify Actions truly good and agreeable to his Law ; it were an Abuse and Forgery to do it, like stamping the King's Name or Image on counterfeit Metal, upon Brass or Tin, instead of Gold or Silver. Good Intention and good Principles are indeed, as it were, the Soul of good Actions ; but their being just and lawful are the Body of them, necessarily also concurring to their Essence and Integrity, they cannot subsist without it, but must pass (as it were) for Ghosts and Shadows. We are therefore concerned in all our Doings to have an especial Regard to *Christ's* Law as their Rule ; that will render them capable of *Christ's* Name, and denominate them Christian.

IV. HERETO we may add, that what we do in Imitation of *Jesus*, and in Conformity to his Practice (that living Rule) we may be said peculiarly to do in his Name. As a Picture useth to bear his Name whom it was made to represent, and whom it resembles ; so if we set *Christ's* Example before us, and endeavour to transcribe it, if our Lives in the principal Lineaments of Sanctity and Goodness resembles his holy Life, they may well bear his Name : But if our Practice be unlike his, we cannot fix his Name thereto without great Presumption. To do thus in *Jesus's* Name (with such a Regard to Him) is a Duty not only prescribed to us, not only as relating to some Cases and Actions, (as when his Charity, his Patience,

his Humility, his Meekness are signally commend-
ed to our Imitation) but generally, *He, that saith
he abideth in Him, ought as He walked, so himself
also to walk*; that is, whoever professes himself a
Christian, ought to conform the whole Tenor of
his Conversation to that JESUS; to endeavour in
every imitable Perfection to resemble Him. So
that whenever we undertake any Action, we should
do well to look upon this Pattern, thus, as it were,
inquiring of ourselves; What did my Master in
this or the like Case; do I do the same Thing,
do I act from the same Principles, do I proceed in
the same Manner as He did; am I herein his Fol-
lower? If so, in his Name let me go on chearful-
ly, if not let me forbear. Doing thus will not
be only according to our Duty, but an especial
Help of good Practice.

V. To do in another's Name doth sometimes
import doing by Power derived or Virtue impar-
ted by another; for a Thing so done may be im-
puted, should be ascribed to that other. So,
Through Thee (saith the Psalmist) *will we push down
our Enemies, in thy Name will we throw down those
that hate us*, (through Thee, and in thy Name sig-
nify the same Thing.) So did the Apostles cast
out Devils, and perform their other Miracles in
JESUS his Name (*by his Name*, it is sometimes
expressed) that is by a Divine Virtue imparted from
Him. To this I add another Acceptation, scarce
different (at least as to our Purpose) from that, ac-
cording to which, doing in another's Name signifies
doing it in Trust, or Confidence reposed upon an-
other, with Expectation of Aid, or Hope, of good
Success from another. So, *we rest on Thee*, (said
good King Asa) *and in thy Name we go against this
Multitude*; in thy Name, that is, Hoping for As-
sistance and Success from Thee. And thus it is
said

said that *David went out against Goliath in the Name of the LORD of Hosts*; that is, confiding in GOD's Help as his only Weapon and Defence: Thus also did the Holy Apostles work their Miracles in JESUS his Name; *by Faith in his Name*, (saith St. Peter) *his Name hath made this Man strong*; that is, we did only trust in his Divine Power, and it was that Power which restored that Weak Person to his Strength.

AND thus also is it our Duty to do all Things in our Saviour's Name; with Faith and Hope in Him; wholly relying upon Him for Direction and Assistance; expecting from Him only a Blessing and happy Issue of our Undertakings. What we do in Confidence of our own Wisdom, or Ability; or in Affiance upon the Help of any other Person or Thing, we do in our own Name, or in the Name of that Thing (or that Person) in whom we so confide; to ourselves, or such Auxiliaries we shall be ready to attribute the Success, and to render the Glory of the Performance; *glorying in our own Arm, and sacrificing to our Net*. But what we undertake only depending upon our LORD for Ability and Success, may therefore bear his Name, because our Faith derives the Power from Him, which enables us happily to perform it; so that the Performance may truly be attributed to Him, and to Him we shall be apt to ascribe it.

AND thus, I say, we are certainly obliged to do every Thing in his Name; (in his Name alone;) retaining a constant Sense both of our own Infirmary, and of the Impotency of all other created Things; and consequently a total Diffidence both in ourselves, and in them; but reposing all our Trust in the Direction, and Assistance of our All-wise, and All-mighty LORD; of JESUS, to

whom all Power in Heaven and Earth is given; (who indeed had it originally by Nature as GOD; but also farther hath acquired it by Desert and Purchase) into whose Hands all Things are given; and all Things put under his Feet; who hath obtained this Power in Design to use it for our Good; and is thereby always ready to help us in our Need; if we have Recourse unto Him, and rely upon Him; making Him what St. Paul styles Him, *Our Hope*; our only Hope; renouncing all other Confidences not subordinate to Him.

To do so is a Duty evidently grounded as well upon the Reason of the Thing, as upon the Will and Command of GOD; to do otherwise is no less a palpable Folly, than a manifest Injury to GOD. For, in Truth, neither have we, nor any other created Thing any Power, other than such as He is pleased freely to dispense; and which is not continually, both for its being and its Efficacy, subject to Him, so that He may at his Pleasure subtract it, or obstruct its Effect: *No King is saved by the Multitude of an Host; a mighty Man is not delivered by much Strength; a Horse is a vain Thing for Safety:* Whence it is plain, that we cannot, upon any created Power, ground a solid Assurance of Success in any Undertaking; it will be *leaning upon a broken Reed* (which cannot support us, and will pierce our Hands) both a vain and a mischievous Confidence; that will abuse us, bringing both Disappointment and Guilt upon us; the Guilt of Wronging our LORD many Ways; by arrogating to ourselves, or assigning to others what He only doth truly deserve, and what peculiarly of Right belongs to Him withdrawing the same from Him; implying Him; unable or unwilling to assist us, and do us Good; neglecting to use that Strength which He so dearly purchased and so graciously tenders

tenders ; so disappointing Him, and defeating (as it were) his purposes of Favour and Mercy toward us.

ON the other Side, trusting only upon our Saviour, we act wisely and justly ; for in doing so, we build our Hopes upon most sure Grounds ; upon a Wisdom that cannot be deceived ; upon a Strength that cannot be withstood ; upon a Goodness that hath no Limits ; upon a Fidelity that can never fail. We act with an Humility, and Sobriety of Mind suitable to our Condition, and to the Reason of Things ; we thereby declare our good Opinion of Him as only able, and very willing to do us Good ; we render Him his just Honour and Due ; we comply with his earnest Desires ; we promote his gracious Designs of Mercy and Kindness, towards us. Hence is it that every where in Holy Scripture GOD so highly commends, so greatly encourages this Duty of Trusting alone in Him ; that He so ill resents, and so strongly deters from the Breach or Omission thereof ; *Thus saith the LORD, Cursed be the Man that trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm, and whose Heart departeth from the LORD ; for He shall be like the Heath in the Desert ; and shall not see what Good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched Places in the Wilderness ; in a salt Land and not inhabited. Blessed is the Man who trusteth in the LORD, and whose Hope the LORD is ; for he shall be as a Tree planted by the Waters, and that spreadeth out her Roots by the River ; and shall not see when Heat cometh ; but her Leaf shall be green ; and shall not be careful in the Year of Drought, neither shall cease from yielding Fruit :* Thus in that Place, thus in innumerable others, we are threatned not only with Disappointment in our Undertakings, but with severe punishment, if we betake ourselves to
other

other Succours, and neglect or distrust, and (in so doing) desert GOD; but are encouraged, not only with Assurance of Success, but of additional Rewards, if entirely in our Proceedings we depend upon GOD.

THUS we should do in all (even our ordinary) Affairs, which no less than the rest are subject to his Power, and governed by his Care. For you know how St. *James* doth reprehend it as Arrogance, to say, *The Morrow we will go to this City, and stay there a Year, and trade and gain;* instead of saying, *if the LORD will we will live, and do this or that*; that is, to resolve upon, undertake, or prosecute any Affair without Submission to GOD's Will, and Dependance on his Providence: But especially we ought, in Matters and Actions more spiritual, to practise this Duty; for to the performing of these, we have of ourselves a peculiar Impotence and Unfitness; needing therefore a more spiritual Assistance from our LORD, the Success of them more particularly depends upon Him; the Glory of them in an especial Manner is appropriate, and (as it were) consecrate to Him.

IF it be a Folly and a Crime, to think we do any Thing without GOD, it is much more so to think we can do any Thing good without Him; it is an Arrogance, it is an Idolatry, it is a Sacrilege much more vain and wicked to do so. To imagine that we can, by the Force of our own Reason and Resolution, atchieve any of those most high and hard Enterprizes, to which, by the Rules of Virtue and Piety we are engaged; that we can, by our Conduct and Prowess encounter and withstand, defeat and vanquish those so crafty, so mighty Enemies of our Salvation (our own fleshly Desires; the

the Menaces and Allurements of the World; the Sights and Powers of Darkneſs) is much a worſe Preſumption, than in other Affairs of greateſt Difficulty to expect Succeſs without the Divine Aſſiſtance and Bleſſing; than in other moſt dangerous Battles, to think we can, *by our own Bow, and by our own Spear ſave ourſelves*; that we can obtain Victory otherwiſe, than from his Hand and Diſpoſal, who is the LORD of Hoſts. Reason tells us, and Experience alſo ſhews, and our Saviour hath expreſſly ſaid it, That (in theſe Things) *without Him* (without his eſpecial Influence and Bleſſing) *we can do nothing*; He tells us, that we are but Branches, inſerted into Him; ſo that, without continually drawing Sap from Him, we can have no Life or Vigour ſpiritual. The wiſeſt and beſt of Men, have, by their Praſtice, taught us to acknowledge ſo much; to depend wholly upon Him, to aſcribe all to Him in this Kind. *Why* (ſay St. Peter and St. John) *do ye wonder at this; or why gaze ye upon us, as if by our own Power, or Piety, we had made this Man walk?*—*His Name* (the Name of JESUS) *through faith in his Name, hath made this Man ſtrong*: That Acknowledgment indeed concerns a miraculous Work; but ſpiritual Works are in Reality no leſs, they requiring as much or more of Virtue ſupernatural, or the preſent Interpoſition of GOD's Hand to effect them; they make leſs Shew without, but need as great Efficacy within; ſo our Saviour did imply, when He ſaid, *He that believes in Me, the Works that I do, he ſhall do, and greater Works than theſe*. Every good and faithful Man doth not work Miracles, yet ſomewhat greater, by the Grace of Chriſt, *he performs*: To theſe St. Paul referr'd, when he affirm'd, *I can do all Things through Chriſt that ſtrengthneth me*; nothing was ſo hard that he feared to attempt, that he deſpaired to maſter by the Help

Help of *Christ*; Not (saith he again) *that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any Thing of ourselves; but our Sufficiency is of God*; He was as sensible of his own Inability, as he was confident in the gracious Help of *Christ*.

THUS should we do all Things in the Name of *Jesus*; and it is not only a Duty to do it, but it may be a great Encouragement to us, that we are capable of doing it; a great Comfort to consider, that in all honest undertakings, we have so ready, and so sure an Aid to second us; confiding in which, nothing is so difficult, but we may easily accomplish (*a Grain of Faith will be able to remove Mountains*;) nothing is so hazardous, but we may safely venture on (*walking on the Sea, treading upon Serpents and Scorpions; daring all the Power of the Enemy.*) In his Name we may, if our Duty or good Reason calls us forth (how small and weak soever, how destitute soever of defensive Arms, or Weapons offensive) naked and unarm'd, with a Sling and a Stone, go out against the biggest, and best armed *Philistine*, nothing doubting of Victory: Our Weakness itself (if we be humbly conscious and sensible thereof) will be an Advantage to us (as it was to *St. Paul*;) to all Effects and Purposes *the Grace of our LORD will be sufficient for us*, if we apply it, and trust therein. But farther.

VI. To do in another's Name may denote, to do it with such Regard to another, that we acknowledge (that, I say, we heartily and thankfully acknowledge) our Hope of prospering in what we do; our Expectation of Acceptance, Favour, or Reward to be grounded on him; that are procured by his Merits and Means; are bestowed only for his Sake. Thus our Saviour bids us to offer

our Prayers in his Name; that is, representing unto GOD his meritorious Performances in our Behalf, as the Ground of our Access to GOD, of our Hope to obtain from Him what we request. So also we are enjoined to *give Thanks in his Name*; that is, with Persuasion and Acknowledgment, that only in Respect to Him we become capable to receive, or enjoy any good Thing; that in Effect, all the Blessings by Divine Mercy vouchsafed us have been procured by Him for us, are through Him conveyed unto us. And thus also we should do all Things in the Name of *Jesus*, offering all our Deeds to GOD, as Sacrifices and Services unworthy of Acceptance, both in themselves, and as proceeding from us; but pleasing, and acceptable to GOD only for his Sake.

WE should do well, upon all Occasions, to remember our natural Condition, and the general State of Mankind; such as it was before He did undertake, such as it would have continued still, had He not undertaken for it. That our Race had forfeited, and was fallen from GOD's Favour; having injured Him beyond all Power of making Him any Reparation or Satisfaction; that thence it was secluded from all Means and Hopes of Happiness, was exposed and tended downright unto Misery; that we consequently had no Ground to hope, that GOD (from whom no less in Mind and in Deed, than by Reason of our Guilt and State of Condemnation we were estranged) would bestow any Good upon us, or accept favourably any Thing we should do. But that, by our Saviour's Performances, the base is altered; He, by his intire Obedience, having so pleased GOD, by his patient Submission to GOD's Will, having so appeased his Anger, and satisfied his Justice, that GOD is not only reconciled, but hath an especial Favour,

Favour, bears an earnest Good-will toward us. That now the good Things we possess, we may truly esteem as Blessings, and enjoy them with real Comfort, as proceeding from Mercy and Kindness; now what we honestly endeavour, we may hope shall please God; now we have a free Access to God, and may chearfully present our Sacrifice of Duty and Devotion, with a full Persuasion that they shall be accepted. But all this Happiness, all these Favours and Privileges, we must always remember to come from the continued Procurement and Mediation of the Beloved; so as ever to be ready to acknowledge it, and to return our Thanks for it.

To this Sense that our Apostle here had an especial Regard, the Words immediately following imply———*Doing all in the Name of the LORD JESUS, giving Thanks to GOD, and the Father by Him*; that is, in all Things we do, taking Occasion to render Thanks to GOD, as for his Sake being merciful and bountiful to us; bestowing upon us the Good we enjoy, blessing our Endeavours, accepting our Performances. We must not conceit, that any Regard, any Mercy, any Favour, any Reward is due to us in Equity, is in Effect conferred upon us upon our own personal Score (for, how mean Things are we in Comparison of his Greatness, how vile and filthy must we appear to his most pure, and all-discerning Eyes; how unworthy of his Regard and of his Affection must we needs take ourselves to be, if we are acquainted with ourselves?) But that *in Him* (i. e. for his Sake, and by his Means) *GOD hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings*; in Him *ἡχαρίτωσεν ὑμᾶς*, GOD hath favoured, and cast his Grace upon us; valuing us, notwithstanding all the Spots with which we are defiled; notwithstanding

withstanding all the Offences we have committed; for the Relation we have to *Jesus*. Nor must we look on our Service (the best we are able to perform) as in themselves grateful or satisfactory: For all of them, if we mark them well, we shall find not only quite *unprofitable to God*, but very defective in many Respects; for, Who can say, he performs any Thing both in Kind, in Manner, in Degree thoroughly right and good; with that Ardency of Love he owes to *God*, with that Purity of Intention, with that earnest Vigour of Spirit, with that Undistactedness of Mind, with which he should perform it? No; in all our Flock we cannot pick out a Sacrifice entire and unblemished: Such as *God* requires, such as Duty exacts of us. They need therefore (all our Services need) to be commended and completed by the beloved Son his perfectly well-pleasing Performances; they need to be cleansed and hallowed, by passing through the Hands of our most holy and undefiled High-priest; to become sweet and savoury from being offered up *in his Censer*. In fine, as all our Actions should, in our Intention, be Works of Religion dedicated to *God's* Service and Honour; Sacrifices, as it were, of Gratitude and Homage to *God*; so they ought all to be offered up in the name of *Jesus*. I add farther,

VII. *Lastly*, THAT to do in the Name of *Jesus*, may well imply doing with Invocation of Him: Thus we may understand that Place of *St. James*, where the elders are advised to pray, and anoint the Sick in the *LORD's* Name; for, to anoint them, imploring our *LORD's* Blessing upon them, and upon those Means used for their Cure. And thus *St. Chrysostome* expounds the Words; do all in *Jesus* his Name, *that is*, saith he, *imploring Him for your Helper in all Things; always first praying to Him,*

undertake your Business. Doing thus, will indeed consecrate our Actions; for *all Things* (saith our *Apostle*) *are sanctified by the Word of GOD, and Prayer*; that is, by GOD's Blessing implored, and obtained by Prayer; (or, if GOD's Word be there taken for his Law, or revealed Will, it is there signified, that our Actions are not only sanctified by their Lawfulness, or Conformity to that good Rule, GOD's declared Will; but also by the Invocation of his Name; however) all our Actions, it seems, are unhallowed and profane, if not accompanied with Devotion. That to do thus is our Duty, appears by those frequent Injunctions, *to pray without ceasing, to pray always, to abide instantly in Prayer*; which not only import, that we should pray often, and continue with Patience, and Earnestness in Prayer; but that we should annex it to, or interpose it among all our Actions, undertaking nothing without it. We should do it (our *Saviour* commands) *πᾶσι καί ποτε*, that is, *on every Occasion*; and *Paul* gives the same Direction; *Praying*, says he, *ὡς πᾶσι καί ποτε*, *on all Opportunities, with all Prayer and Supplication in Spirit*; (in Spirit, that is, I take it, in our Hearts at least, and with secret Elevations of our Mind, if not with our Mouth and Voice.) And (more explicitly elsewhere saith he,) *Be careful for nothing, but in every Thing* (in all your Affairs) *by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known to GOD.*

THUS to do (to accompany all our Undertakings with Prayer) we are indeed concerned upon many Accounts. We need GOD's Direction (being ourselves blind and ignorant) in the Choice of what we attempt; that our Ends may be good; conducive to GOD's Honour and our own true Advantage. For, as the Prophet tells us, *The Way*
of

of Man is not in himself, neither is it in Man that walketh to direct his Steps; And, as the Wiseman adds, *Man's Goings are of the LORD, how then can a Man understand his own Way?* (implying, since GOD only knows what is best for us, that we ourselves, without his Direction, know not what to do, whither to go :) The holy Psalmist signifies the same in those Words (very encouraging to the Practice of this Duty) *What Man is he that feareth the LORD?* (that feareth Him, that is, who worshippeth Him, and seeketh his Guidance) *him shall He teach in the Way that he shall chuse.*

WE need also (being ourselves not only weak and infirm, but inconstant and unstable) GOD's Assistance, and upholding Hand in the Pursuance of our well-chosen Designs (that we may use the best Means, and proceed in a straight Course; that we may persist upright and steady in our Proceedings) that which the Wiseman seems to call, the establishing of our Thoughts, and Promises, as a Consequence, upon our seeking GOD's Assistance in our Actions, and relying thereon. *Commit*, says he, *thy Works unto the LORD, and Thy Thoughts shall be established;* (thou shalt drive on thy good Purposes steadily, without stumbling or failing. So the Psalmist assures us concerning a good Man: *The Steps of a good Man are ordered by the LORD; none of his Steps shall slide; though he fall, he shall not utterly be cast down; for the LORD upholdeth him with his Hand.*

As to the final Success of our Affairs, also, we stand in Need of GOD's Blessing; that He, upon whose Will altogether depends the Disposal of all Events, should bestow a good Issue on our Endeavours; that which also the Psalmist assures us of obtaining, upon Condition of our imploring and depending

depending upon GOD for it; *Commit thy Way* (saith he) *unto the LORD; trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.* We do thus need, in all our Affairs, the Direction, Assistance and Blessing of our LORD; but shall not have them without Prayer; for, the Rule is, *Ask and have, Seek and find,* without asking we are not likely to obtain those Gifts; without seeking we must not hope to find those Benefits from GOD. If we are so proud, as to think we do not need them, or so negligent, as not to mind them; or so distrustful of the Divine Power or Goodness, that we imagine He cannot or will not afford them to us; we are like to be so unhappy as to want them. GOD expects from us, that we should, in whatever we do, acknowledge Him; (it is the Wisemans Expression, *In all thy Ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy Paths;*) acknowledge Him as the only faithful Guide and Counsellor; as the sufficient Helper and Protector; as the only Giver of good Success.

NOTHING therefore is well done, which is not thus done; we cannot be satisfied in what we do, we cannot hope for a comfortable End thereof; we cannot expect a Blessing from GOD, if we have refused, or if we have neglected the recommending our Proceedings to his Care. We can, I say, do nothing; not eat, not sleep, not trade, not travel, not study with any true Content, any reasonable Security, any satisfactory Hope, if we have not first humbly implored GOD's Favour; committing ourselves and our Business into his Hand, that Hand, which dispenseth all Good, which alone can keep off all Danger and Mischief from us. *GOD shall send his Angel before thee:* So did our Father Abraham send his Servant about his Business; having questionless before commended it to
 GOD

GOD by Prayer. GOD Almighty give you Mercy before the Man: So did Jacob give his Sons their Dispatches toward Egypt: In such a Manner did we enter upon all our Affairs, we could not but be full of Hope, and void of Care concerning them; for, having committed our Business into so sure a Hand, how could we farther be solicitous about it? Had we, according to St. Peter's Advice, *Cast our Care upon the LORD*; or, *cast our Burthen upon Him* (as the Psalmist exhorts us) had we duly sought Him, who *never faileth them that seek Him*, we should be secure, that nothing bad, or disastrous, could befall us; we should experience it true, what the Prophet affirms, *Thou shalt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed on Thee*: Thus, in the last Place, should we do all Things in the Name of Jesus (upon all Occasions praying to Him, or which is all one, to GOD in his Name) which that we may do (that we are allowed and encouraged to do it) is also a Privilege, and an Advantage unvaluable.

IN so many Ways may we, and ought we to perform all we do in the Name of Jesus: We should do every Thing out of grateful Affection to Him, as our chief Principle; every Thing as his Servants, aiming especially at the pleasing Him and promoting his Honour, as our principal End; every Thing according to his Will and Commandment, as our constant Rule; every Thing, after his Example, as our best Pattern; every Thing, in Confidence of his gracious Assistance and Blessing, as our only Strength and Support; every Thing with hope of Acceptance purely upon his Account; every Thing with a thankful Sense and Acknowledgment to GOD for the Mercies and Favours conveyed unto us by his Means, conferred upon us for his Sake; every Thing with humble

Invocation of Him, or with Prayer to GOD in his Name: In sum, every Thing with a due Regard to Him; so that He be not passed over or left out in any Thing we undertake; but come always into Consideration, according as our Relations to Him, and our Obligations to Him require. In the Performances of which Duties the Life indeed of our Religion (of all our good Practice, of all our Devotion) doth consist.

To all this I shall only subjoin the Mention of one general Duty, implied in all and each of those which is this;

VIII. THAT our LORD *Jesus* should be frequently (and in a Manner continually; always, as to the habitual Disposition of our Souls, actually upon all fit Occasions) present to our Minds and Thoughts. This, I say, is plainly implied in the former Duties. For, how is it possible we should perform all our Actions, yea, utter all our Words, with a Regard to Him, if we seldom think of Him? Things far distant, or long absent, can have small Efficacy or Influence; it is so we see in natural, and it is no less so in moral Causes, wherein Representation to the Fancy and Memory have a Force answerable to that which real Conjunction hath in Nature. As the Heat and Light of the Sun, the farther he goes, and the longer he stays from us, does the more decrease; so according to our less frequently, and less seriously thinking upon any Object, our Affection and Respect thereto decays. If therefore we desire to maintain in our Hearts such Dispositions (due Affection and due Reverence) toward *Jesus*; if we intend to suit our Actions accordingly with due Regard to Him, we should, in order to those Purposes, apply this so necessary and useful Mean,

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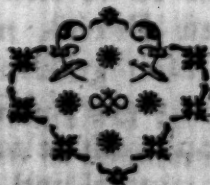
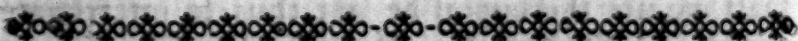
of frequently bending our Minds towards Him, in order to the sanctifying our Affections, and the governing our Actions in a constant Performance of our Duty.

WILL not that most amiable and most venerable Idea of a Person so entirely pure and holy, so meek and humble, so full of Benignity towards all Men, particularly towards ourselves, be apt to beget an especial Love and Reverence towards Him? Incline us strongly to do well, yea teach us what and how we should do so, in Conformity to such a Pattern set before us? While it is impressed on our Thoughts, that He is our LORD and Master, who made us and maintains us, who purchased us to Himself, and redeemed us from miserable Slavery by his own Heart-blood, how can it fail to raise in us some Awe, some Sense of Duty toward Him? Will not the Apprehension of what He did and what He suffered for us powerfully mind us, that according to all Justice and Equity, in all Ingenuity and Gratitude, we are bound to do only that which will please Him? If we think of *Jesus*, when we are setting upon any Action, shall we not thereupon be apt thus to interrogate ourselves? Shall I do otherwise than He did, or would have done, so rendering myself unlike or contrary to Him? Shall I be so unfaithful to my glorious Master, as to disserve Him, or to neglect his Service? Shall I be so unworthy my gracious Redeemer, my best Friend, my most bountiful Benefactor, as to disoblige Him, to wrong Him, to dishonour Him, to grieve Him by thus doing? Shall I be so vain and rash as to cross Him who is my King, able to control and subdue me; as to offend Him who is my Judge, resolved to condemn and punish me? Shall I wilfully forfeit that Favour of his, upon which all my Happiness depends?

pende? Shall I procure his Displeasure and Enmity, from which my utter Ruin must inevitably follow? Our frequent thinking upon, and the Presence (as it were) of our blessed Saviour to our Minds, may therefore be commended to us as an excellent Instrument of bettering our Hearts and our Lives.

To conclude; Let us always remember, and consider, that we are Christians, related unto *Christ Jesus*, and called by his Name, and as so, in his Name, let us do all Things.

LORD of all Power and Might; who art the Author and Giver of all good Things; graft in our Hearts the Love of thy Name; increase in us true Religion; nourish us with all Goodness; and of thy great Mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ our LORD.





S E R M O N II.

Of CONTENTMENT.



IN THREE SERMONS.



PHIL. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatever State I am, there-
with to be content.*

IN these Words, by the Example of an eminent Saint, is recommended to us the Practice of an excellent Virtue: A Practice grateful to God, and of great Benefit to ourselves; being indeed necessary towards the comfortable Enjoyment of our Lives:

Lives: It is Contentedness, the Virtue, which of all other doth most render this World acceptable, and constituteth a Kind of temporal Heaven; which he that hath, is thereby *ipso facto* in good Measure happy, whatever other Things he may seem to want; which he that wanteth, doth, however otherwise he be furnished, become miserable, and carrieth a Kind of Hell within him: It cannot therefore but well deserve our best Study about it, and Care to get it; in Imitation of St. Paul, who *had learned in whatever State he was, therewith to be content.*

IN discoursing upon which Words, I shall consider two Particulars: First, the Virtue itself, (Contentedness in every State) the Nature of which I shall endeavour to explain; then the Way of attaining it, implied by St. Paul in the Words, *I have learned.*

I. FOR Explication of the Virtue: The Word here expressing it is, *αὐτάρκεια*, which signifieth Self-sufficiency; which is not to be understood absolutely, as if he took himself to be independent in Nature, able to subsist of himself, not wanting any Support or Comfort without himself, (for this is the Property and Privilege of the great EL-SHADDAI, who alone subsisteth of Himself, needing nothing without Himself: This is repugnant to the Nature of Man, who is a Creature essentially dependent for his Being, indigent of many Things for his Welfare) but relatively, considering his present State, the Circumstances wherein he was, and the Capacities he had; which, by God's Providence, were such, that he could not want more than he had in his Possession, or Reach. He meant not to exclude God, and his Providence; but rather supposed that as the Ground and Cause of his Self-sufficiency, according as elsewhere he expresseth it:

Not

Not as if we were sufficient of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of GOD: Nor did he intend to exclude the Need of other Creatures, otherwise than as considered without his Possession, or beyond his Power; but he meaneth only, that he did not desire or want more than what GOD had supplied him with, had put into his Hand, or had set within his Reach; that his Will did suit to his State, his Desire did not exceed his Power.

THIS is the Meaning of the Word, which the Apostle useth: But for the more full and clear understanding the Virtue itself, we shall first consider the Object about which it is conversant; then the several Acts wherein the Exercise thereof consisteth.

I. THE Object of Contentedness is the present State of Things, whatever it be, (whether prosperous or adverse) wherein by Divine Providence we are set: *The Things in which we are*, that is our present Condition, with all its Circumstances: So it may be generally supposed, considering that it is ordinary, and almost natural for Men (who have not learned as St. Paul had done) to be dissatisfied and disquieted in every State; to be always in Want of something; to find Defects in every Fortune; to fancy they may be in better Case, and to desire it earnestly: If we estimate Things wisely, rich Men are more liable to Discontent than poor Men. It is observable, that Prosperity is a peevish Thing, and Men of highest Fortune are apt most easily to resent the smallest Things: A little Neglect, a slight Word, an displeasing Look doth affect them more than Reproaches, Blows, Wrongs do those of a mean Condition.

THE formal Object of Content may indeed seem to be a Condition distasteful to our Sense; an adverse

verse or strait Condition; a Condition of Poverty, of Disgrace, of Inconvenience or Distress; but since most Men are absolutely in such a Condition, exposed to so many Wants and Troubles; since many more are needy comparatively, wanting the Conveniences that others enjoy, and which themselves desire; since there are few, who in right Estimation are not indigent and poor, that is, who do not desire, and fancy themselves to want many Things which they have not, (for Wealth consisteth not so much in the Possession of Goods, as in Apprehension of Freedom from Want, and in Satisfaction of Desires;) since Care, Trouble, Disappointment, Satiety and Discontent following them, do not only haunt Cottages, and the lowest Sort of People, but even frequent Palaces, and pursue Men of highest Rank, therefore any State may be the Object of Contentedness; and the Duty is of a very general Concernment; Princes themselves need to learn it; the Lessons teaching it, and the Arguments persuading it, may as well suit the Rich and Noble, as the Poor and the Peasant: So our Apostle himself doth intimate in the Words immediately following our Text, *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: Every where, and in all Things I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer Need*: He had the Art not only to manage well both Conditions, but to be satisfied in either.

BUT seeing real Adversity, Poverty and Disgrace have naturally the strongest Influence in disturbing our Minds, that Contentedness is plainly most needful in such Cases, as the proper Support or Medicine of our Mind in them; that other States do need it only as by Fancy or Infirmary they symbolize and conspire with these: Therefore unto Persons in these States we shall more explicitly apply
our

our Directions, as to the proper and primary Subjects of Contentedness; the which, by Analogy or Parity of Reason, may be extended to all others, who, by imaginary Wants and Distresses, create Displeasure to themselves. So much for the Object of the Virtue.

2. THE ACTS wherein the Practice thereof consisteth, (which are necessary Ingredients of it) belong either to the Understanding, or to the Will, or to external Demeanour and Practice; being (1.) Right Opinions and Judgments. (2.) Fit Dispositions of Heart. (3.) Outward good Actions and Behaviour, in regard to the Events befalling us; the former being as the Root, the latter as the Fruits and Flowers of the Duty.

(1.) As to our Opinions and Judgments of Things, Contentedness requireth, That

1. WE should believe our Condition, whatever it be, to be determined by God; and that all Events befalling us proceed from Him, at least, that He permitteth and ordereth them, according to his Judgment and Pleasure: That *both Good and Evil proceedeth not out of the Mouth of the Most High: That Affliction* (as Job said) *cometh not forth of the Dust, neither doth Trouble spring out of the Ground;* as a Thing spontaneously, or sowed by the Hand of some Creature, but rather descendeth from Him, who saith, *I form the Light, and create Darkness; I make Peace, and create Evil; I the LORD do these Things.*

WE are apt, when any Thing falleth out unpleasant to us, to exclaim against Fortune; or to inveigh against second Causes, ascribing all to their Influence; which Proceeding argues in us a *Hea-*

thenish Ignorance and Infidelity, or at least much Inconsiderateness, and Impotency of Mind; that our Judgment is blinded and clouded, or perverted and seduced by ill Passions; for, in Truth, there is not in the World any Occurrence merely fortuitous or fatal, (all being guided and wielded by the powerful Hand of the All-wise and Almighty God) there is no Creature which in its Agency doth not depend upon God, as the Instrument of his Will, or subordinate thereto; wherefore upon every Event we should, raising our Minds above all other Causes, discern and acknowledge GOD's Hand; as *David* did, when *Shemel* cursed him, *Let him* (said the good King) *curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, curse David*; as *Job* did, when he was rifled of his Goods, *The LORD* (said he) *gave, and the LORD hath taken away*; as our Saviour did, when in Regard to the sore Hardships He was to undergo, He said, *The Cup which my Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*

2. HENCE we should always judge every Thing which happeneth to be thoroughly fit and good, worthy (all Things considered) to be appointed or permitted by that Governor of Things; not entertaining any harsh Thoughts of GOD, as if He were not wise, just, or benign, in ordering us to be afflicted or crossed; but taking all Occurrences to be well consistent with all GOD's holy Perfections.

WE are apt to conceit, that the World is ill ordered, when we do not prosper therein; that every Thing is irregular, which squareth not to the Model of our Fancy; that Things had gone much better, if our Designs had found Success; but these are vain Conceits, for that certainly is most good which seemeth good to GOD; his Will is a perfect Standard of Right, his Eye never aimeth wrong,
his

his Hand never faileth to hit the Mark of what is best; *All his Paths are Mercy, and Truth; He is righteous in all his Ways, and holy in all his Works:* So did King Hezekiah rightly judge, when upon Denunciation of a sad Doom to his Country and Posterity, he replied to the Prophet, *Good is the Word of the LORD, which thou hast spoken:* So even the Pagan Sage discerned, when he thus rebuked a Malecontent, “ You Slave, do you desire any
“ Thing but what is best? And is not that only
“ best, which seemeth best to God?

3. WE should be satisfied in our Mind, that according to GOD's Purpose all Events conduce to our particular Welfare; being not only good, in order to more general Ends, but serving towards our private Advantage. We may be ready perhaps to confess, that whatever happeneth may be just and fit in some distant and occult Respects; but hardly can be induced to allow, that what we feel offensive to our Sense and Fancy, is really good for us, or was meant for our Benefit; we cannot easily discern any Thing of Love or Favour in such Matters: Those Sort of Aphorisms in Holy Scripture, *Happy is the Man, whom GOD correcteth; As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten,* sound strangely; such is our Blindness of Mind, and Dulness of Apprehension: But GOD knoweth with so exact a Skilfulness to manage Things, that every particular Occurrence shall be advantageous to the Person whom it touched, and accordingly to each He dispenseth that which is most suitable to him; whence, as frequently it is needful for us that we should be crossed, (for otherwise we should often much harm, sometimes we should quite undo ourselves) so it always, when GOD so ordereth it, is to be deemed most profitable for us: We are therefore in Reason obliged to take the sharpest Afflictions, coming

upon us by Providence, to be no other than fatherly Corrections, or friendly Rebukes, designed to render us good and happy; as Arguments therefore and Instances of especial Good-Will towards us; conceiving under every Dispensation that we do as it were hear GOD speaking to us, as He did to those by the Prophet, *I know the Thoughts that I think toward you, Thoughts of Peace, and not of Evil, to give you an expected End.*

4. HENCE we are to believe, that our present Condition (whatever it be to Sense) is, all Things considered, the best; most proper, most desirable for us; better than we, if it were at our Choice, should put ourselves into: For GOD (*the Saviour of all Men, who desireth that no Man should perish; who is good to all, and whose tender Mercies are over all his Works*) doth ever (here in this Life, the Time of Trial) with a most wise Good-Will design our best Good; and by the most proper Methods (such as best suit our Circumstances and Capacities) doth aim to draw us to Happiness; and accordingly doth assign a Station for us, most befitting in order to that great End: We therefore should think ourselves well placed, because we are where GOD doth set us; that we have enough, because we have what GOD alloteth us.

(2.) FROM such Judgments concerning Things incident to us, should proceed the following Dispositions.

I. WE should entertain all Occurrences, how grievous soever to us, with entire Submission and Resignation of our Will to the Will of GOD, wholly acquiescing in his good Pleasure; saying in our Hearts after our LORD, *Let not my Will, but Thine be done;* with good Eli, *It is the LORD, let Him*

Him do what seemeth Him good; with David, Behold here I am, let Him do to me as seemeth good to Him; even with Socrates, "If it pleaseth God, so let it be;" with Epictetus, "I always will that which cometh to pass; for I account that better which God willeth, than what I will myself; I will adhere as a Servant and Follower to Him, I pursue, I affect, I simply will with Him:" Looking upon them as sent from God, we should heartily bid them welcome, we should kindly embrace them, we should use them with all fair Respect: ἀγκαλίσαι τὰ συμβαίνοντα, (kindly to embrace the Things which fall out) φέρει τὰ ἀπορροῦμενα, (to love Things dispensed by Providence) are Precepts, which even Philosophers inculcate.

THIS excludeth all rebellious Swellings of Mind against Providence, such as argue that we dislike God's Government; that were we able we should struggle with God's Will; that we gladly would shake off his Yoke; all such Repining at our Lot, which maketh God's Hand grievous, and his Yoke uneasy to us; such Affections as the wise Man toucheth, when he saith, *The Foolishness of Man perverteth his Way, and his Heart fretteth against the LORD.*

2. WE should bear all Things with steady Calmness and Composedness of Mind, quelling those Tumults, those Storms, those Passions, which the Sense of Things disgustful is apt to excite. No Adversity should so ruffle our Minds, as to hinder us from perceiving or performing what becometh us, so as to engage us into any irregular or unseemly Behaviour.

3. WE should indeed bear the worst Events with a sweet and chearful Disposition of Mind, so as not

to be put out of Humour, not to be dejected or discouraged by them, not to fall into that *Heaviness* which (as the wise Man saith) *maketh the Heart of Man to stoop*; but rather finding Delight and Complacency in them, as considering whence they come, whither they tend: Such was the Disposition of the Apostles and primitive Christians, in the Midst of their most grievous Sufferings; *they took joyfully the spoiling of their Goods; they accounted it all Joy, when they fell into divers Tribulations; they were as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing*; their State was grievous, but their Heart was constantly chearful. Such a constant Frame of Mind we should maintain, so continually prepared we should be against all Contingencies, that nothing should happen amiss to us, so as deeply to affect us, or to unsettle us in our Temper; that every Thing from God's Hand should be acceptable; that no Sadness may seize on us, at least that we do not indulge or cherish it; that in no wise we suffer any Regret to quench our spiritual Comfort and Joy in God, which becometh the Upright, (as the Psalmist saith,) and which we are so often enjoined perpetually to maintain, as in all Cases, so particularly under Afflictions and Trials. We cannot indeed be content, if we are not chearful; for the Mind can hardly stand in a Poise, so as neither to sorrow or joy: We cannot digest Adversity, if we do not relish it; we will not submit to it as his Will, if we do not take it for an Argument of his Love: *εὐδοκῶ, I* (saith St. Paul) *have a Liking or Pleasure in Infirmities, in Reproaches, in Necessities, in Persecutions, in Distresses for Christs Sake; for when I am weak then I am strong.*

4. WE should with Faith and Hope rely and wait on God for the Removal or Easement of our Afflictions, or however we should confide in Him for

for Grace and Strength to support them well; as our Saviour did, when He prayed, *Father, if Thou be willing, remove this Cup*; as they did in the Prophet, who said, *In the Way of thy Commandments, O LORD, we have waited on Thee*; according to that Rule in the Lamentations, *It is good that a Man should both hope, and wait quietly for the Salvation of the LORD*; and those Precepts in the Psalms, *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him; wait upon the LORD, be of good Courage, and He shall strengthen thine Heart.*

WE should in any Case be ready with the holy Psalmist thus to interrogate, and sustain ourselves: *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? Why art thou so disquieted within me? Hope thou in GOD, for I shall yet praise Him for the Help of his Countenance.*

REMEMBERING and considering, that (as we are expressly taught in Scripture, and as all our Religion doth clearly suppose) GOD *knoweth to rescue the Godly out of Tribulation*, (He knoweth the proper Season, when it is fit to do it) that *He is faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able*; but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, that we may be able to bear it; reflecting, I say, on these certain Truths, we should never sorrow as those who are without Hope; we should never despair of a good Riddance from our Adversity, when it shall be seasonable and beneficial for us; we should always be assured of a comfortable Support under it, which is usually better than Deliverance from it; our Minds should never sink into Despondency: That this is practicable in the worst Case, we have conspicuous Instances to assure us; it hath been the Practice of most illustrious and excellent Persons; never was any Condition, in outward Respects and Appearance, more forlorn

forlorn and dismal than was theirs, yet it no-wise bereaved them of Hope or Courage: *We* (they could say) *are troubled on every Side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed but not in Despair, persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed.*

5. WE should not faint or languish in our Minds upon any Occasion: No Adversity should impair the Force of our Spirit; should enervate our Courage, or slacken our Industry; should render us sick or weak in Heart; for, *If* (saith the wise Man) *thou faint in the Day of Adversity, thy Strength is small*; (it is the Sign of an infirm Mind,) and *μη ἰκάνῃς*, not to falter or decay, *μη ἰκλῖνῃς*, not to be dissolved or disjointed in our Souls, (as the Body is in scorbutick Distempers) are Rules prescribed to us in such Cases: We do then indeed need a firm and robust Constitution of Soul; we should then bear up most resolutely: The Encouragement of *Moses*, to the People entering upon Battle, may well be accommodated to us, in Regard to our Conflict with Adversities: *Let not your Hearts faint, fear not and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them.*

6. WE should not be weary of our Condition, or have irksome Longings for Alteration; but with a quiet Indifferency, and Willingness of Mind, lie under it, during GOD's Pleasure, according to the wise Man's Advice, *My Son, despise not the Chastening of the LORD, neither be weary of his Correction*; and that of the Apostle, enforced by our LORD's Example, *Consider Him, that endured such Contradiction of Sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your Minds.* We should not think GOD slow, or his Time long and tedious, as if He were forgetful of us, or backward to succour us; as the Psalmist was inclined to do, when in
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the Day of Trouble he brake forth into these Expressions, *Will the LORD cast off for ever, and will He be favourable no more: Hath GOD forgotten to be gracious? Hath He in Anger shut up his tender Mercies?* Thus he was apt to think and speak; but recollecting himself, he perceived it was his Error, and confessed it was his Fault thus to imagine, *I said, it was mine Infirmary*; and it will be ours likewise, if we entertain such Conceptions: We should with the same Mind endure our present State, as we pass through a hard Winter, or a Time of foul Weather, taking it for seasonable and fit, because the wise Author of Nature hath so appointed it.

7. WE should by adverse Accidents be rendered lowly in our own Eyes, and sober in our Conceits of ourselves; meek and gentle, tender and pliable in our Temper; sensible of our Unworthiness and Meanness, of our natural Frailty, Penury and Misery, of our actual Offences; deeply affected in Regard to the awful Majesty and Power, to the perfect Holiness, and strict Justice of GOD; they should quell our haughty Stomach, they should supple our stiff Wilfulness, they should soften our hard Hearts, they should mitigate our peevish Humours: To effect these Things is usually the Design of such Incidents, and it is ever the best Fruit of them: This is that which St. Peter adviseth to, when he saith, *Be humbled under the mighty Hand of GOD*; which GOD approveth, and encourageth with a gracious Promise, when He saith, *To this Man will I look, even to him that is of a poor and contrite Spirit, and trembleth at my Word*: This Disposition is an inseparable Adherent to Contentedness; he that hath not his Spirit thus broken, or mollified, will hardly be content in any State; he that is haughty

in Conceit, and sturdy in Humour, will every where find that which will disturb him.

8. IT is required that we should, notwithstanding any Hardness of our Condition, be meekly and kindly affected toward others, being satisfied and pleased with their more prosperous State. We should not be angry with the World, because we do not flourish in it; we should not be fullen or peevish toward any Man, because his Fortune is better than ours; we should not repine at the good Success of any of our Brethren, because we want the like ourselves; *we should rather rejoice with them that rejoice*, borrowing some Satisfaction from their Enjoyments. It is humane thus to do, because of the natural Relation of Men; it is christian, because of our spiritual Consanguinity, by Virtue whereof we are so knit together, and made *Members each to other, that if (as St. Paul telleth us) one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it, and if one Member be honoured, all the Members should rejoice with it*: We can hardly be content without thus appropriating the Goods, and sharing in the Delights of others; he can never be content, who looketh with an evil Eye upon other Mens Prosperity; he cannot do well himself, who loveth not to see his Neighbour do well, numberless Occasions will happen to discompose him.

ADVERSITY impatiently borne is apt to sour our Spirits, and render us froward toward Men; especially when it proceedeth from the Unkindness, Ingratitude, or Treachery of Friends, or of Persons obliged to us for our Good-Will, or for Benefits done to them: But nothing should render us unkindly disposed toward the World, nothing should extinguish Charity in us toward any Man; so plain Reason teacheth us, so great Examples enforce:

force: *Moses* did not lose his Affection towards his Countrymen, because he was by one of them threatened into Banishment; the Apostles became not disaffected to the World, because it misused and persecuted them; our LORD continued most earnestly to desire, and laboriously to endeavour the Good of those who most despitefully used Him: Like theirs, in all Cases, should our Disposition be; we should ever observe the Psalmist's Advice, *Cease from Anger, forsake Wrath, fret not thyself in any wise to do Evil.*

9. AGAIN, Contentedness doth imply a Freedom from all Sollicitude and Anxiety of Mind, in Reference to Provision for the Needs and Conveniences of Life; according to those Rules of *casting our Burden and Care upon the LORD, of being careful for Nothing, but commending our Affairs to God's Ordering*; according to that most comfortable Precept of our LORD, *Take no Care, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or how shall we be clothed; for your heavenly Father knoweth, that ye want all these Things*: If we do not thus, it is hardly possible that we should be content: If we do not depend upon Providence, we cannot escape being often distracted with Care, and perplexed with Fear; we cannot chearfully hope for any Thing we need, nor be quietly secure of any Thing we possess.

10. It requireth also that we should curb our Desires, and confine them in narrow Bounds; so as not to affect more in Quantity, or better in Quality, than Nature does require: If we must have Superfluities, if we can only relish Dainties, we shall never be pleased; for as Nature hath Limits, and is content with little, so Curiosity is an infinite and insatiable Thing: *H: that loveth Pleasure shall be*

be a poor Man; he that loveth Wine and Oil shall not be rich; that is, he that is curious and nice in his Desires, will never have enough. The Rule which (according to St. Paul) should regulate our Desires, is this, Having Food and Raiment, let us with them be satisfied: If this will satisfy us, we may easily obtain Satisfaction; a moderate Industry, with God's Blessing, will procure so much: God hath promised to bestow it: If this will not suffice, there is no sure Way of getting or keeping more: As God is no-wise obliged to provide us Superfluities, or concerned to relieve our extravagant Longings; so we may fear, that Providence will be ready to cross us in our Cares and Endeavours tending to those Purposes, so that we shall be disappointed in the Procurement, or disturbed in the Fruition of such needless Things: However, he that is most scanty in his Desires, is likely to be most content in his Mind: "He (as Socrates said) "is nearest the Gods (who need nothing) that "needeth fewest Things."

In fine, Contentedness doth import, that whatever our Condition is, our Minds and Affections should be modelled just according to it; so that our Inclinations be compliant, our Desires suited thereto, so that we can easily comport with the Inconveniences, can relish the Comforts, can improve the Advantages of it; otherwise, like an ill-made Garment, it will sit unhandsome upon us, and be troublesome to us. It is not usually our Condition itself, but the Unsuitableness thereof to our Disposition and Desires, (which soureth all its Sweetness, and rendereth its Advantages fruitless) that createth Discontent; for (although it be very mean) others bear the same chearfully; many would be glad thereof: If therefore we will be content, we must bend

bend our Inclinations, and adapt our Desires to a Correspondence with our State.

IF we are rich, we should get a large and bountiful Heart, otherwise our Wealth will hang loose about us; the Care and Trouble in keeping it, the Suspicion and Fear of losing it, the Desire of increasing it, the Unwillingness to spend or use it, will bereave us of all true Satisfaction therein, and render it no less unfavoury to us, than unprofitable to others.

IF we are poor, we should have a frugal, provident, industrious Mind, sparing in Desires, free from Curiosity, willing to take Pains, able to digest Hardships, otherwise the Straitness of our Condition will pinch and gall us.

ARE we high in Dignity or Reputation? We then need a Mind well ballasted with sober Thoughts, otherwise the Wind of Vanity will drive us into absurd Behaviour, thence will dash us upon Disappointments, and consequently plunge us into Vexation and Discontent.

ARE we mean and low? We need a meek and lowly, a calm and steady Spirit; not affecting Respect, or resenting the Want of it; apt to pass over or to bear quietly Affronts and Neglect, not apt to be moved by Words of Contempt or Disdain; else (being fretted with such Things, which we may be sure often to meet with) we shall be uneasy, and impatiently wish a Change of our State.

THESE, and the like Dispositions, this Duty containeth: From hence should arise such Actions as these which follow:

1. WE should restrain our Tongues from all Expressions, implying Dissatisfaction in GOD's Proceedings, or Displeasure at his Providence; arguing Distrust in GOD; such as were those of the discontented *Israelites*, *They* (saith the Psalmist) *spoke against GOD; they said, can GOD furnish a Table in the Wilderness? Behold He smote the Rocks that the Waters gushed out, and the Streams overflowed: Can He give Bread also, can He provide Flesh for his People?* Such as they used, of whom the Prophet said, *When they shall be hungry, they will fret themselves, and curse their King and their GOD;* as those in the Apocalypse, who being afflicted with deserved Judgments, *did blaspheme the Name of GOD, which had Power over those Plagues.* Into such profane Enormities is Discontent apt to break forth, questioning the Power of GOD, or his Willingness to succour us; venting Wrath and Displeasure toward Him; charging Him foolishly with Injustice, or with Unkindness, or with Negligence, or with Impotency; the abstaining from which Behaviour, under the Sense of his bitter Calamities, is a great Commendation of *Job*, *In all this* (it is said) *Job sinned not, neither charged GOD foolishly.*

2. WE should indeed forbear any the least Complaint or Murmuring, in Regard to the Dispensations of Providence, or upon Dissatisfaction in the State allotted us: St. *Jude* saith, that *GOD in the 1st Day will come, to execute Judgment, and to convince Men of all their hard Speeches, which ungodly Sinners have spoken against Him; these* (subjoineth he) *are ὀυλίσται μωυψιστοί, Murmurers, that complain of their Lot; which signifieth the Heinousness and extreme Danger of this Practice. Wherefore doth the living Man complain?* is the Prophet's Question, implying it to be an unreasonable and blameable Practice. Wherefore the Advice of *David*

vid is good ; to suppress all Complaint, to be still and silent in such Cases, *Be still* (saith he) *and know that I am GOD*, and *Be silent to the LORD* ; the which Precepts his Practice may seem well to interpret and back ; *I was* (saith he) *dumb, I opened not my Mouth, because it was thy Doing* : And accordingly *Job, Behold* (saith he, after having considered all the Reasons he could imagine of GOD's Proceedings) *I am vile, what shall I answer Thee ? I will lay my Hand upon my Mouth.* And thus our Saviour, when *He was oppressed and afflicted, opened not his Mouth.*

3. YEA it is our Duty, in these Cases, to spend our Breath in declaring our Satisfaction in GOD's dealing with us ; acknowledging his Wisdom, Justice and Goodness therein ; blessing and praising Him for all that hath befallen us ; each of us confessing, *I know, O LORD, that thy Judgments are right, and that Thou in Faithfulness hast afflicted me* ; imitating *Job*, who upon the Loss of all his Goods did say no more than this, *The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away ; blessed be the Name of the LORD.*

4. WE should abstain from all irregular and unworthy Courses toward the Removal or Remedy of our Needs or Crosses, choosing rather to abide quietly under their Pressure, than by any unwarrantable Means to relieve ourselves ; rather bearing patiently, than violently, like those in the Prophet, *breaking our Yoke, and bursting our Bands. Take Heed, regard not Iniquity ; for this hast thou chosen, rather than Affliction.* We should rather continue poor, than by Cozenage and Rapine endeavour to raise our Fortune ; we should rather lie under Disgrace and Contempt, than by sinful and sordid Compliances strive to acquire the Favour of Men ; we

should rather willingly rest in the lowest Condition, than do as those, who by disturbing the World, by fomenting Disorders and Factions, by supplanting their Neighbours, by venting Slanders and Detractions, labour to increase their Estate; we should rather endure any Inconvenience, than have Recourse to Ways of evading them, disallowed by GOD; doing as the *Jews* did, who in their Straits, against the declared Pleasure of GOD, *set their Faces toward Ægypt, strengthened themselves in the Strength of Pharaoh, trusted in the Staff of that broken Reed.* In Neglect or Diffidence toward GOD, to embrace such Aids, is (as GOD in the Prophet declareth) a very mischievous Folly: Ephraim (saith He) *is like a silly Dove without Heart; they call to Ægypt, they go to Assyria—Woe unto them, for they have fled from Me; Destruction unto them, because they have transgressed against Me.* We may consider how St. Paul reproveth the *Corinthians* for seeking a Redress of Wrong, scandalous and dishonourable to the Church, *Now therefore it is utterly a Fault among you, that ye go to Law one with another; why do ye not rather take Wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? Even to right ourselves in a Way whereby any Dishonour may come to GOD, or Damage to his Church, is not to be approved; and better it is in the Apostle's Judgment, to bear any Injury ourselves: Better it is (saith St. Peter) if the Will of GOD be so, that we suffer for Well-doing than to do ill: And, Let them, who suffer according to the Will of GOD, commit the keeping of their Souls to Him in Well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.*

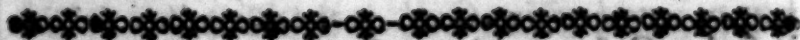
5. WE should, notwithstanding any Adversity, proceed in our Affairs (such as GOD requireth) with Alacrity, Courage and Industry; performing, however, so far as our Circumstances permit, what is good and fit for us: No Disappointment or Cross,

no Straits or Grievances should render us listless or lazy, but rather quicken and inflame our Activity; this being a good Way to divert us from the Sense of our Misfortunes, and to comfort us under their Pressure; as also the readiest Way to remove or to abate them, to order the present well, whatever it may be; to march forward whither God calls (how difficultly or slowly it be) in a rough or dirty Way; not to yield to Difficulties, but resolutely to encounter them, to endeavour with all our Might to surmount them, are Acts worthy of a christian Courage; to direct ill Accidents to good Ends, and improve them to honest Uses, is the Work of a noble Virtue. *Put thy Trust in the LORD, and be doing Good*, is the Psalmist's Advice in such a Case; and it is a Practice necessary to the procuring and maintaining Content.

6. WE should behave ourselves fairly and kindly toward the Instruments of our Adversity; toward those who brought us into it, and those who detain us under it, by keeping off Relief, and those who forbear to afford the Succour we expect; forbearing to express any Wrath or Displeasure, to exercise any Revenge or Enmity toward them; but rather, even upon that Score, bearing Good-Will, and expressing Kindness toward them, not only as to our Brethren, whom, according to the general Law of Charity, we are bound to love, but as to the Servants of God in this particular Case, and the Instruments of his Pleasure toward us; considering, that by maligning or molesting them, we express Displeasure at God's dealing with us, and, in Effect, through their Sides wound his Providence: Thus the holy Apostles *being reviled did bless, being defamed did entreat*: Thus our LORD demeaned Himself toward his spiteful Adversaries; who, *when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered,*

ed, He threatned not, but committed it to Him that judgeth righteously.

IN these, and such like Acts, the Duty of Contentedness is especially employed and exercised: And so much may suffice for the Explication of its Nature: I come now to consider the Way of attaining it.





S E R M O N III.

Of CONTENTMENT.



PHIL. iv. 11.

I have learned to be content.

BUT how may this be learned? I answer, chiefly (Divine Grace concurring) 1. By understanding the Rules wherein the Practice thereof consisteth. 2. By seriously considering and impressing upon our Minds those Inducements which are apt to persuade the Practice thereof. These may be drawn from several Heads; from GOD, from ourselves, from our particular Condition or State; from the general State of Men here; from the particular State of other Men in Comparison to ours; from the Nature and Consequences of the Duty itself: Every Thing about us well examined, will minister somewhat by the Grace of GOD inducing and assisting thereto.

I. IN

I. IN regard to GOD we may consider, that Equity doth exact, and Gratitude require, that we should be content; in being discontented we behave ourselves very unbeseemingly and unworthily, are unjust, ungrateful, and foolish toward Him.

I. EQUITY doth exact this of us, and in performing it we act justly toward GOD, both admitting his due Right, and acknowledging his good Exercise thereof; That saying in the Gospel, *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own?* is a most evident Maxim of Equity; it is therefore the natural Right and Prerogative of GOD (as the Creator and Preserver, and consequently the absolute LORD, Owner and Governor of all Things) to assign his Station, and allot his Portion to every Person, as he judgeth good and convenient; it is most just that inviolably He should enjoy this Right; He being also infinitely wise and good, it is likewise most just to acknowledge that he doth perfectly well manage this Right. Now by Submission to GOD's Disposal of Things, we express our due Regard to both these, avowing his Right, and approving his Exercise thereof; but by Discontent and Regret at what happeneth, we do in Effect injure GOD in both those Respects, disavowing his Right, and impeaching his Management. We thereby so renounce his Right, as in Effect to invade it, and usurp it to ourselves; signifying, that in our Opinion Things ought not to be ordered according to his Judgment and Pleasure, but after our Fancy and Humour; we claim to ourselves the Privilege of dispensing his Goods, so as to be our own Carvers, and to assume to ourselves so much as we think good; we imply, that, if we were able, we would extort the Power out of his Hands, and manage it ourselves, modelling

delling the World according to our Conceits and Desires.

WE do also (since we cannot but perceive the Attempt of dispossessing GOD to be fruitless) in Effect charge GOD with Misdemeanour, with Iniquity or Infirmitie in his Distribution and Disposal of Things; intimating, that in our Opinion He doth not order them so justly, or so wisely as might be (not so well as we in our Wisdom and Justice should order them) for did we conceive them managed for the best, we could not but judge it most unreasonable to be aggrieved, or to complain: So heniously insolent, and unjust are we in being discontent. In earnest, Which is most equal, that GOD should have his Will, or we? For Shame we shall say GOD: Why then do we not contentedly let Him have it?

It is indeed, if we consider it, the highest Piece of Injustice that we can be guilty of; exceeding that which we commit in any other Sort of Disobedience. For as in any State seditious Mutinies is the greatest Crime, as most directly violating the Majesty, and subverting the Authority of the Prince; so in the World, none may be supposed more to offend and wrong its Sovereign Governor, than such Malecontents as dislike and blame his Proceedings. Even a *Heathen* could teach us, that it is our Duty to subject our Mind to Him that administred all Things, as good Citizens to the Law of the Commonwealth; if we do not, we are rebellious and seditious, which is the highest Pitch of Injustice toward our most gracious Sovereign.

AGAIN, there can be no greater Injury, or Affront offered to GOD, than to give Him the Lie,
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by questioning his Veracity; this Discontent plainly doth: For GOD hath expressly declared Himself ready upon all Occasions to do us Good; He hath promised to *care for us*, and *never to forsake us*, or leave us destitute; which Word of his if we did not distrust, and take Him to be unfaithful, we could not be discontent: As no Man is displeased with his Condition, or suspicious of Want, who knoweth that he hath abundant Supply of all he can need in a sure Place; that he hath a Person most able, most willing, most faithful engaged to succour him; so did we believe GOD to be true, who hath promised to help us, we could not be discontented for Fear of any Want.

WE must at least in so doing, suspect GOD to be deficient in Goodness toward us, or unwilling to help us; or we must apprehend Him impotent, and unable to perform what He hath promised for us; like those Infidels, who said, *Can God furnish a Table in the Wilderness? Can He give Bread also, can He provide Flesh for his People?*

2. GRATITUDE requireth of us this Duty; for we having no Right, or Title to any Thing, all that we have coming from GOD's pure Bounty; He having upon us all, whatever our Condition comparatively is, freely conferred many great Benefits, common to all Men among us (our Being, Life, Reason Capacity of eternal Happiness, manifold spiritual Blessings, incomparably precious and excellent) we in all Reason should be thankful for these, without craving more, or complaining for the Want of other Things. Whereas also all Events (how cross soever to our sensual Conceits or Appetites) are by GOD designed, and dispensed for our Good; and Gratitude requireth, that we should

should thank GOD for them, and not murmur against them.

SURELY, if instead of rendering GOD Thanks for all the excellent Gifts, which He most liberally, without any previous Obligation to us, or Desert of ours, hath bestowed on us, and continueth to bestow, we fret, and quarrel with them, we are extremely ungrateful and disingenuous toward Him. He hath made us capable of the greatest Goods imaginable, and upon easy Terms proffereth them to us; He even tendereth Himself (Himself, the immense and all comprehending Good, the Fountain of all Joy and Bliss) to be fully enjoyed by us; his Wisdom He offereth to instruct and guide us, his Power to protect and guard us, his Fullness to supply us, his Goodness to comfort us; He offereth his Love and Favour to us, in having which we in Effect have all Things; becoming thereby, in the highest Degree, rich and honourable and happy; And is it not then outrageous Unworthiness to prize any other Thing (any petty Accommodation of this transitory Life, any pitiful Toy here) so much, as to be displeased for the Want thereof; as if all this were not enough to satisfy our Needs, or satiate our Desires; as if notwithstanding all these immense Effusions, of Bounty upon us, we could be indigent or unhappy? *Shall we receive so much Good from the bountiful Hand of GOD, and shall we not contentedly receive so small Evils from Him?* Evils in Name, but not in Reality, at least not so in GOD's Design; but rather Things convenient and profitable for us; which is another Aggravation of our Ingratitude; for

ARE we not also ungrateful in misapprehending, and disliking that, which GOD doeth out of a gracious

gracious Intention toward us; in loathing his fatherly and friendly Dispensations; the fatherly Chastisements and friendly Disciplines, which He unwillingly is forced (is, I say, forced by his own great Love, and by our pressing Needs) to inflict upon us? Surely our ill Opinion of, or *despising* (as the Wise-man calleth it) these unpleasant Blessings is no small Fault; Neither will our not discerning, out of affected Dulness, the Wisdom of God's Methods, and the Wholesomeness of the Means He useth to better us, excuse us from foul Ingratitude.

3. AGAIN, upon many Accounts, Reason farther dictateth in Respect to God, that we should be content: Because it is most reasonable to acquiesce in God's Choice of our State, He being infinitely more wise than we, and infinitely better understanding what is good for us that we can do; because He is well affected to us, and more truly loveth us than we do ourselves; because He hath a just Right, and irresistible Power to dispose of us, which whatever we can do, He will effectually make Use of, whence it is extremely foolish to be discontent: Foolish it is to be dissatisfied with the Results of his Wisdom, adhering to our vain Apprehensions; foolish to distrust his Goodness in Compliance with our fond Self-love; foolish to contest his unquestionable Right and uncontrollable Power, having nothing but mere Impotency to oppose against them; no less than downright Madness it is to fret at that which we can in no wise help, to bark at that which lodgeth in Heaven so far above us; If we think, that our Displeasure will affect God, that our Complaints will incline Him to alter our Condition, we conceit vainly, and without any Ground; sooner may we, by our Imagination, stop the Tides of the Sea, or
turn

turn the Streams of Rivers backward; sooner, by our Cries, may we stay the Sun, and change all the Courses of the Stars, than by our passionate Resentments or moanful Clamours we can check the current of Affairs, or alter that State of Things, which is by GOD's high Degree established: Discontented Behaviour will rather fasten our Condition, or remove it into a worse Place; as it highly doth offend GOD, and increaseth our Guilt, so it moveth GOD to continue, and to augment our Evils. Thus lifting up our Eyes to Heaven, and considering all Things with respect to GOD, will induce us to bear our Case contentedly.

II. AGAIN, reflecting upon ourselves, we may observe much Reason to be content with our State; in whatever Capacity we look upon ourselves, we in Duty are obliged to be so.

As Creatures we naturally are indigent and impotent, we have no just Claim to any Thing, nor any Possession maintainable by our Power; all that we have, or can have, cometh from pure Bounty; wherefore how little soever is allowed us, we have no Wrong done us, nor can we justly complain thereat: Such Beggars as we are must not pretend to be Chusers; if any Thing be given us we may be glad, we should be thankful. It is for those who have a Right and a Power to maintain it, to resent, if their Due be withheld; but for us that never had any Thing, which we could call our own; that have no Power to get or keep any Thing; for us that came into the World naked and defenseless, that live here in continual, absolute Dependence for all our Subsistence, to contest with Him that maintaineth us, or to complain of his Dealing, is ridiculously absurd.

UPON a moral Account we have less Reason to challenge ought, or to complain of any Thing; for we deserve nothing but Evil: If we rightly value ourselves, any Thing will seem good enough for us, any Condition better than we deserve: Duly examining the Corruption of our Nature, the Depravedness of our Hearts, the Enormities of our Lives, we cannot but apprehend, that we are unworthy even of the *Crumbs which fall from our Master's Table*; we cannot but acknowledge with the good Patriarch, that we are *less than the least of GOD's Mercies*. Considering our natural Unworthiness, we deserve not so much as those common Benefits without which we cannot subsist; so that in Regard to them we shall be ready to acknowledge, LORD, *what is Man that Thou takest Knowledge of him, or the Son of Man, that Thou makest Account of him?* Trying our Hearts, and examining our Ways, we shall soon discover it to be abundant Mercy, that we are not utterly deprived of all good Things, stript of all Comforts, yea dispossessed of our very Being; so that we are obliged to acknowledge, *It is of the LORD's Mercies that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not.* Were we far better than we are, yet it would not become us to contest with Him, to whose Disposal and Judgment we are subject; as *Job* teacheth us: *Behold* (saith he) *GOD taketh away, who can hinder Him, who will say unto Him, what dost Thou? If He will not withdraw his Anger, the proud Helpers stoop under Him; how much less shall I answer Him, and chuse out my Words to reason with Him; whom though I were righteous, I would not answer, but I would make Supplication to my Judge; but for us, Men so unrighteous and guilty, to debate with, to question the Proceedings of our Judge is much more unseemly.*

NOTHING

NOTHING can be more absurd, than for Men so deeply indebted, than for Sinners so obnoxious to Wrath, to murmur in any State: Shall we, who are conscious to ourselves of so many Sins against our GOD; who by wilful Transgressions, or slothful Neglects, have so much affronted and offended Him; who have so little requited his Love, and so much abused his Patience; who have borne so little Fruit, and rendred Him so little Service, shall we be angry that our Humour is not pleased in all Things? Shall we affect to swim in Plenty, to wallow in Pleasure, to bask ourselves in Ease? who deserve not the meanest Competence, to whom it is a great Favour that we are permitted to subsist, whom strict Justice would often have cast into utter Misery? It is not surely for such Persons to be dissatisfied with any Thing in this World, but to bless GOD's exceeding Mercy, that they abide on this Side of the bottomless Pit; it is their Part, with submissive Patience, to bear whatever is inflicted on them, humbly saying, *I will bear the Indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him.* Seeing, whatever our Crosses or Sufferings be, we cannot but confess to GOD, *Thou hast punished us lest than our Iniquities deserve;* being in Comparison to what was due to us very favourably dealt with. Why should we be dissatisfied? If in such Cases Men should deal so favourably with us, we should be much pleased, and ready to thank them; Why then should we take it ill of GOD, when He even in his hardest Proceedings against us, expresseth so much Indulgence and Mercy?

If we must be displeased, and complain, we have Reason rather to accuse ourselves, than to exclaim at Providence, for our Evils are not so much the voluntary Works of GOD, who *doth not afflict willingly, or grieve the Children of Men,* as the natu-

al Products of our Sins, which we wilfully commit. It is (as the Prophet speaketh) *our Sins* that withhold good Things from us; and bring evil Things upon us: *Fools, because of their Transgression, and because of their Iniquities, are afflicted.* We make Adversity necessary, or expedient for us, then we cry out upon it: We labour in Planting, but cannot brook the *Fruit of our Doings*: But wherefore doth the living Man complain, for the Punishment of his Sins?

WE may farther, looking on ourselves, consider ourselves as Servants to GOD, absolutely subject to his Disposol; and shall any Servant, presume to chuse his Place, or determine his Rank in the Family? Shall he appoint to himself what Office he will discharge, what he will do, and how he shall be accommodated? Is it not fit that all these Things should be left to our Master's Discretion? Is it not reasonable that we should thoroughly acquiesce in his Determination? Even a *Pagan* Philosopher could teach us this, who thus piously directeth his Speech to GOD: "For the rest use me to what Thou pleasest. I consent unto Thee, and am indifferent. I refuse nothing which seemeth good to Thee; lead me whither Thou wilt; put on me what Garment Thou pleasest: Wilt Thou have me to be a Governor or a private Man, to stay at Home or be banished, to be poor or to be rich? I will, in Respect to all these Things, apologize for Thee with Men." Thus did *Epietetus* say, and such Speech well becometh our Relation to GOD: Servants should be content with their Master's Appointments and Allowances; they should not only themselves forbear to find Fault with, but be ready to maintain his Proceedings against any, who shall presume to blame them. Especially such Servants as we are, who, after we have done all Things commanded us,
must

must acknowledge that we are unprofitable Servants: Such as can bring no Benefit to our LORD, or any wise advance his State; such as therefore cannot challenge any Wages from Him, more than He out of mere Favour is pleased to allow: Could we, by our Labours, enrich GOD, or raise Him in Dignity, it might seem congruous that He should answerably reward us; but as He getteth Nothing by us, so we cannot require any Thing from Him: Our best Services indeed rather need Pardon, than deserve any Reward: No Man hath lived so well, that he can pretend any Thing from GOD, that he is not indeed much behind-hand in his Accounts with GOD, having received from GOD far more of Benefit than he can return to Him in Service: No Man, without extreme Presumption, can offer to prescribe, in what Measure, or what Manner GOD should reward him.

AGAIN, if we consider ourselves as the Children of GOD, either by Nature, or by Adoption and Grace, How can we be discontent for any Thing? Have we not thence great Reason to hope, or rather to be confident, that we shall never want any good Thing necessary and convenient for us? For is not GOD by paternal Disposition inclined, is He not in a Manner, by paternal Duty, engaged, in all needful Occasions, to supply and Succour us? Can we (without great Prophaneness) surmise, that He, which is so immensely good, will be a bad (an unkind, or a neglectful) Father to us? No, as there is no other Father in Goodness comparable to Him, so none, in real Effects of Benignity, can come near Him; so our LORD assureth us: *If ye (saith He) being Evil, know how to give good Things to your Children; How much more will your heavenly Father give good Things to his Children that aske Him.*

IF we consider ourselves as Christians, we have still more Reason to practise this Duty : As such, we are not only possessed of Goods abundantly sufficient to satisfy our Desires ; we have Hopes able to raise our Minds above the Sense of all present Things ; we have Entertainments that ever may divert our Minds, and fill our Hearts with Comfort ; but we have also an Assurance of competent Supplies of temporal Goods ; for, *Godliness is profitable to all Things, having the Promise both of the present Life, and that which is to come :* and, *If we seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, and its Righteousness, all these Things shall be added unto us.* It is indeed strangely unhandsome for a Christian ever to droop or to be disconsolate ; for a Friend of God, and an Heir of Heaven to think he wants any Thing, or fear that he shall ever want ; for him, whose Treasure and Heart are above, to be so concerned with any Thing here.

WHEREFORE considering ourselves, our Capacities, our Relations, our Actions, it is most reasonable to be content with whatever doth befall us.

FARTHER, if we consider our Condition (be it what it will, how poor, how mean, how despicable soever) we can have from it no reasonable Ground of Discontent.

I. Our Condition in this World cannot (if rightly estimated, and well managed) be extremely bad, nothing here can occur insupportable ; we cannot, if we please, want any Thing considerable, the Defect whereof may not be supplied, or supported by far better Enjoyments. If we have high Opinions of some Things, as very excellent or needful for us, it is no Wonder if we want them,

them, that our Condition is unpleasant; if we take other Things for huge Evils, then, if they be on us, we can hardly escape being displeased; but if we thoroughly look through such Things, and scan them exactly, valuing them, not according to Sense, or Fancy, but according to sound Reason, we may find, that neither Absence of the former nor the Presence of the latter doth render our Case deplorable.

WE are, for Instance, poor: And what great Harm in this? It is a State, which hath its no small Conveniences, which freeth us from many Cares and Distractions, from many Troubles and Crosses, from many Encumbrances, Dangers, Temptations, many sore Distempers of Body and Soul, many grievous Mischiefs, to which Wealth is exposed; which maintaineth Health, Industry and Sobriety; disposeth us to feed heartily, to move nimbly, to sleep sweetly; which preserveth us from Luxury, from Satiety, from Sloth and Unwieldiness. It is a State, which many have borne with great Chearfulness; many wise Men have voluntarily embraced; which is allotted by Divine Wisdom to most Men; and which the best Men often endure; to which God hath declared an especial Regard, which the Mouth of Truth hath proclaimed happy; which the Son of God hath dignified by his Choice, and sanctified by his partaking deeply thereof; and can such a Condition be very loathsome; can it reasonably displease us?

AGAIN, thou art, suppose, fallen into Disgrace, or from Honour and Credit, art depressed into a State of Contempt: This also rightly prized is no such Wretchedness; for what doth this import? What, but a Change of Opinion in giddy Men, which

which thou dost not feel, which thou art not concerned in, if thou pleasest; which thou never hadst Reason much to regard, or at all to rely upon? What is thy Loss therein? It is the Breaking of a Bubble, the Sinking of a Wave, the Changing of a Wind; what is Honour, but Thought; and what more flitting, what sooner gone away than a Thought? And why art thou displeased at the Loss of a Thing so very slender? If thou didst know its Nature, thou canst not be disappointed; if thou didst not, it was worth thy while to be thus informed by Experience, that thou mayest not any more regard it. Is the Contempt, thou hast incurred, from thy Fault? Bear the Consequence thereof patiently, and do thy best by removing the Cause to reverse the Effect: Is it undeserved? Be satisfied in thy Innocence, and be glad that thou art above the Injustice of those who condemn thee. Let thy Affections rather be employed in Pity of theirs, than in Displeasure for thy own Case.

BUT thou art perhaps troubled because thou art wrongfully censured, odiously traduced and defamed, abused by Slander, which asperseth thee with Things whereof thou art no wise guilty, or representeth thee in a Character unworthy of thee? Be it so; what then?

Is not every Man subject to these Things? Are not the greatest Men, the wisest, the best liable to the same? Yea chiefly liable, Excellency being the special Mark of Envy and Obloquy? Can any good Men escape free of them among so many bad Men, whose Doings, as Goodness doth reproach, so it provoketh their Malignity? Canst thou imagine to pass thy Days in so unjust a World without incurring such Usage; can so many vain,
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so many bold, so many lawless Tongues be tied up, or kept within compass of Truth, or Equity? Wilt thou suffer it to be in the Power of any Man at his Pleasure so easily to discompose thee? Because he will be bad, shalt thou be miserable? Why dost thou not rather please thyself in thy Innocence, and Clearness from the Blame which they impose on thee? Why dost thou not rather pity their Unhappiness, who stoop to so base Practices? They do themselves far more Mischief, than they can do thee.

AND why dost thou not consider, that thou art really guilty of many Faults, and full of Imperfections, so that no Man can easily derogate from thee more than thou deservest: He may indeed tax thee unjustly, he may miss in the Particulars of his Charge, he may discover groundless Ill-will toward thee; but thou knowest thyself to be a grievous Sinner, and it is just that thou shouldest be reproached (God, for thy Humiliation, or thy Correction, may have ordered him, as *David* said of *Shimei*, to curse thee) thou hast therefore more need to be humble in Reflection on thyself, than to swell with Disdain in regard to his Injury.

THOU shouldest improve this Dealings, and make it wholesome to thee, by taking Occasion thence to correct thy real Faults; that so thy Conscience may be a firm Bulwark against all Detraction: In fine, satisfy thyself by committing thy Soul with Patience in well-doing, unto thy Judge, who assuredly will do thee Right, will protect thy Reputation, and clear thy Innocence: His Judgment is only worth regarding, be little concerned with any other.

AGAIN,

AGAIN, Being disappointed and crossed in the Success of their Undertakings, is wont to put Men, as they conceive, into a wofull Case ; But why so ? Why didst thou build upon Uncertainties ? Didst thou not foresee a Possibility, that thy Design might miscarry, and if so, why art thou not prepared to receive what happeneth ? Didst thou refer the Business to GOD's Disposal ? If not, thou deservest to be crossed, and rather confess thy Fault, than complain of thy Fortune ; if thou didst, then be consistent with thyself, and acquiesce in his Determination : If thou so improvest thy Disappointment, thou art a Gainer by the Loss, thou *doest more than conquer* by thy Defeat. However, since the Gain, the Credit, the Preferment thou hast missed, are Things in themselves of no great Value, and such as thou mayst well live without, as other good Men have done, thou canst not have much Reason to be displeased upon this Account.

BUT Friends, will some Men say have been unkind, have been ungrateful, have been fickle and false, have neglected, deserted, betrayed me ; *It was not an Enemy, that reproached me, then I could have borne it.* This indeed is commonly most grievous ; yet being scanned will not render a Man's Condition so lamentable : For, such Misbehaviour of Friends is more their Calamity than ours : The Loss of bad Friends is no Damage, but an Advantage ; it is but the Loss of a Mischief, and a Trouble : The fewer we have of such, the more Time we save, the less Trouble we meet with, the greater Security we enjoy. The Kindness we have shewed, the Obligations we have put on such, are not quite lost, they will bring a Reward. And if all other Friendships should fail, there is one remains, worth Millions of other Friends,

Friends, who can never prove unfaithful or inconstant, who never will be unmindful of us, or deficient in Kindness.

THE Death of Friends doth, it may be, oppress thee with Sorrow.

BUT canst thou lose thy best Friend; canst thou lose the Presence, the Conversation, the Protection, the Advice, the Succour of GOD? Is He not immortal, is He not immutable, is He not inseparable from thee? Canst thou be destitute of Friends, whilst He stands by thee? Is it not an heinous Indignity to Him, to behave thyself, as if thy Happiness, thy Welfare, thy comfort had Dependence on any other but Him? Is it not a great Fault to be unwilling to part with any Thing, when He calleth for it?

NEITHER is it a Loss of thy Friend, but a Separation of a small Time; he his only parted from thee as taking a little Journey; within a while we shall be sure to meet again, and joyfully to congratulate in a better Place; *præmissimus, non amissimus*; we have sent him thither before, not quite lost him from us.

THY Friend, if he be a good Man (and in such Friendships only we can have true Satisfaction) is himself in no bad Condition; thou canst not therefore reasonably grieve for him; and to grieve only for thyself is pervert Selfishness.

BUT thou hast lost a great Comfort of thy Life, and Advantage to thy Affairs here. Is it truly so? Is it indeed an irreparable Loss, even secluding the Consideration of GOD, whose Friendship repaireth all possible Loss? What is it, I pray, that
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was pleasant, convenient, or useful to thee in thy Friend, which may not in good Measure be supplied here? Was it a Sense of hearty Good-will, was it a sweet Freedom of Conversation, was it found Advice or kind Assistance in thy Affairs? And mayest thou not find those left, which are alike able, and willing to minister those Benefits? May not the same Means, which knit him to thee, conciliate others to thee? He did not surely possess all this Good-nature Wisdom in the World, nor hath carried them all away with him: Other friends thou mayst find to supply his Room: Is it not therefore a fond and unaccountable Affection, rather than Want of a real Convenience that disturbeth thee?

BUT farther, it perhaps displeaseth us, that the Course of the World doth not go right; that Justice is not well dispensed, that Virtue is not considered, that Industry is not rewarded, that Innocence and Modesty are trampled upon; that Favour, Partiality, Corruption, Flattery, Craft, Impudence, carry all before them; devouring all the Encouragements due to honest Industry: This may be, but art thou guilty of contributing to this? Then mend; if not, then bear; especially seeing thou canst not help it; for so it hath always been, and ever will be in the World, that Things never have gone there as the best Men desire: There have never been good Men enough to sway the World, nor will the few good Men that are, be so active in promoting publick Good, as bad are in driving on their private Designs; doth not this Course of Things necessarily spring from the Nature of Men, which therefore we should no more be vexed at, than for that a Serpent hath Poison, or that a Wasp hath a Sting? We cannot wonder at it, why then should we be strangely affected by it?

it? Could any Man ever have been pleased, if this were a sufficient Cause of Displeasure? However the World goes, GOD is engaged to provide for us; and that should satisfy us. GOD observeth these Things no less than we, and He can easily hinder them, yet He thinketh good to suffer them; and shall not we do so likewise? There is in fine appointed a Judgment, when all these Things shall be set streight; when Virtue shall triumph, when Integrity and Industry shall find their due Recompence, it is but a Moment to that Time, and 'till then we may rest satisfied.

THUS if we rightly state Things, which cause Discontent, we shall find, that not from the Things, but from ourselves all the Mischief proceeds: We by our Imagination give to the lightest Things a Weight, and swell the smallest Things into a vast Bulk; we fancy them very frightful and doleful, then we tremble and grieve at them. Mere Names (the Names of Poverty, of Disgrace, of Defeat) scare us, without consulting Reason: We follow silly Prejudices, judging that highly good which the Vulgar admireth, that very evil which the weakest Sort of Men complain of; hence so commonly doth our Case seem grievous. But in Truth there is no Condition so bad, but if we manage it well and wisely, if we moderate our Passions about it, if we vigilantly embrace and enjoy the Advantages thereof, may be easily supportable, yea comfortable to us; it is our fond Conceits, our froward Humours, our perverse Behaviours, which create the Trouble that imbittereth every State; which from any slight Occasion doth create Vexation, and turneth every Event into Disaster.

2. As there is no Condition here perfectly and purely good, (not deficient in some Conveniences, not blended with some Troubles) so there is none so thoroughly bad, that it hath not somewhat convenient and comfortable therein; seldom or never all good Things forsake a Man at once, or all Mischiefs together assail him; somewhat usually abideth, which well improved, or wisely enjoyed, may satisfy a Man, yea render his Estate comparable to theirs, who to vulgar Eyes appear to be in the best Condition: There is in every Condition somewhat of Good compensating its Evils, and reducing it to a Balance with other more plausible States. We are, suppose, in Poverty (that Instance I propound usually, as the most ordinary Ground of Discontent) but have we therewith good Health? Then most rich Men may envy us, and reasonably we should not exchange our State with many crazy Princes: Have we therewith our Liberty? That is an inestimable Good which often the greatest Men would have purchased with Heaps of Gold: Have we therein a quiet Mind? It is that which wise Men have prized above any Wealth: Have we Friends? That is more than the richest Persons can assure themselves of, to whom it is impossible to distinguish the Friends of their Person from the Flatterers of their Fortune; it is a Privilege which Princes are hardly capable to arrive at: Have we just sufficient to maintain our Life? We thereby keep our Appetites in better Compass, and our Faculties in greater Vigour; we thence better relish all Things; we in Consequence thereof avoid the Burdens, the Diseases, the Vices of Sloth and Luxury: Why then, if our poor State hath so manifold Conveniences, do we so much distaste it? Why do we so dwell on the Inconveniences, overlooking the Benefits we may enjoy thereby? This indeed ordinarily is our Folly,

Folly, that the Want of any little Thing which we fancy, doth hinder us from Satisfaction in all other Things; *One dead Fly* causeth all our Ointment to stink; the Possession of a Kingdom will not keep us from being heavy and displeased (as *Ahab* was) if we cannot acquire a small Vineyard near us: So capriciously, and unaccountably prone are we to Discontent.

3. Is our Condition (let me ask again) so extremely bad, that it cannot be worse? Are we sunk to the Bottom of all Calamity? No surely; God's Providence will not suffer that to be: But however, let us imagine our Case to be the worst that can be; that a Confluence of all temporal Mischiefs hath arrived, that we are utterly bereaved of all Comforts this World afforded; that we are stripped of all our Wealth, quite sunk in our Reputation, deserted of every Friend, deprived of our Health and our Liberty; that all the Losses, all the Disgraces, all the Pains which poor *Job* sustained, or far more than those have together seized on us; yet we cannot have sufficient Reason to be discontent; for nevertheless we have Goods left us in our Hands, or within our Reach, far surpassing all those Goods we have lost, much outweighing the Evils we undergo: When the World hath done its worst, we remain Masters of Things incomparably better than it, and all it containeth; the Possession whereof may, and (if we be wise) will abundantly satisfy us. We are Men still, and have our Reason left behind, which alone, in Worth, exceedeth all the Treasures of the World: We may have a good Conscience left, and that is a *continual Feast*, yielding a far more solid Pleasure than the most ample Revenue can afford: We may have Hope in God, the Author of all good Things, and thereby far greater

Assurance of our convenient Subsistence and Welfare, than all present Possessions can bestow; we have reserved a free Access to the Throne of Grace, and thereby a sure Means (grounded on God's infallible Promise) of obtaining whatever is good for us; we have a firm Right to innumerable Spiritual Blessings, each of them justly valuable beyond whole Worlds; we can, in a Word, enjoy God's Favour, which immensely transcendeth all other Enjoyments, which vastly more than countervaileth the Absence of all other Things; of this, by applying ourselves to the Love and Service of God, we are infallibly capable; of this no worldly Force or Fortune can despoil us; we having this, our Condition cannot be poor, contemptible or pitiful; it is indeed thereby most rich, glorious and happy: For how can he be poor that hath the LORD of all Things always ready to supply him; who hath God (as the Psalmist is wont to speak) to be *his Portion for ever*? How can he be despicable, that hath the Honour to have the Sovereign Majesty of the World for his especial Friend? How can he be miserable, who enjoyeth the Fountain of all Happiness, who hath *the Light of God's Countenance* to cheer him, who hath the Consolations of God's Holy Spirit to refresh and revive him? What can he want, who, besides his present Interest in all the needful Effects of God's bountiful Love, is an Heir of Heaven? Seeing therefore it is in our Power to be religious, seeing we may, if we will (God's Grace concurring, which preventeth us to seek, which never is withheld from those who seek it) be good Christians; seeing nothing can hinder us from fearing God, or can *separate us from his Love*, neither can any Thing render our Condition bad or unhappy, really distressed or needy: *O fear the LORD* (saith the Psalmist) *for there is no Want to them that*
fear

feare Him: The young Lions do lack and suffer Hunger; but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good Thing.

WHY then are we discontent? What do we groan or grieve for? What is it that we want? Is it Virtue, is it GOD's Favour? Then indeed we have good Cause to be displeased; but if we do want them, it is only ourselves that we should complain of; for we may have them if we will, and who can help it if we will not? If we shall wilfully deprive ourselves of them, who will be concerned to mind our Complaints? But is it only Money, or Honour, or Pleasure, that we need? Is it that we cannot feed so delicately, or so finely cloath our Backs, or so thoroughly sooth our Fancies, as we could wish, that we so pitifully moan? Is it that we are slighted, that we are crossed in some Design, which so discomposeth us? Then are we sottishly fond and childish: For proper it is to Children, when they want no solid Goods, to wail for worthless Toys; it is for Children, when they have not their Will in petty Matters, to cry and lament; Children are much affected with every Word or little Shew that crosseth them: If we were (as St. Paul chargeth us to be) *perfect Men*, if we had manly Judgments, and manly Affections, we should not so value any of these transitory Things, either Good or Evil, as by the Want of one, or the Presence of the other, to be much disturbed; we should, with St. Paul, style any present Evil, τὸ ἱλαρόν τῆς θλίψεως, a *Lightness of Affliction*: We should with him reckon, that the *Sufferings of this present Time are not worthy to be compared with the Glories which shall be revealed to us*: We should, with St. Peter, greatly rejoice, though for a Season we are in Heaviness, through manifold

manifest Trials, or Afflictions: We should esteem any Condition here very tolerable, yea very good.

4. IN Truth (if we can bear Truth sounding like a Paradox) usually our Condition is better, when it seemeth worse; then we have most Cause to be glad when we are aptest to grieve; then we should be thankful when we complain; that it appeareth otherwise to us, is because we ordinarily judge (or rather not judge, but fancy) like Beasts; prizing Things merely according to present Sense, or Shew, not examining their intrinsick Natures, or Consequences.

ADVERSITY is the Thing which we chiefly loath; whereas, in true Judgment, nothing commonly is more necessary, more wholsome, more beneficial to us; nothing is more needful or conducive to the Health of our Soul, and our real Happiness: It is the School of Wisdom, wherein our Minds are disciplined and improved in the Knowledge of the best Things, whence it is termed *paideia*, that is, instructive Chastisement; so David found it; *It is, said he, good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy Statutes;* and our LORD Himself, *ἐκ τῆς ἐναντίας ἐμαυτοῦ ἐμαθήκατο τὴν ὑπακοήν*, learned Obedience from what He suffered. It is the Academy wherein Virtue is acquired and exercised; so GOD meant it to his People; *The LORD thy GOD (saith Moses) led thee this forty Years in the Wilderness, that He might humble thee, and prove thee.* So the Wise Man saith, that *by the Sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better;* and, *It yieldeth (saith the Apostle) the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness to them that are exercised thereby.*

It is the Furnace of the Soul wherein it is tried, cleansed and refined from the Dross of perverse Hu-

Humours, of vitious Distempers: *When* (saith *Job*) *He hath tried me, I shall come forth as Gold:* And, *Gold* (saith the *Wise Man*) *is tried in the Fire, and acceptable Men in the Furnace of Adversity.*

It is the Method whereby God reclaimeth sturdy Sinners to Goodness, engageth them to seek and serve Himself; so of the *Israelites* the Prophet saith, *LORD, in Trouble have they visited Thee, they poured out a Prayer when thy Chastning was upon them;* so *Manasses*, when he was in Affliction besought the *LORD* his *GOD*, and humbled himself greatly before the *GOD* of his Fathers; so *Nebuchadnezzar*, after being driven from his Kingdom, his Understanding returned unto him, and he blessed the Most High, and praised and honoured Him that liveth for ever. So *David* himself, Before, said he, *I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy Word.*

It is that whereby God doth prepare Men for the blessed Rewards hereafter: *Our light Affliction* (saith *St. Paul*) *which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory;* and, *Ye* (saith *St. Peter*) *greatly rejoice, though now for a Season, if Need be, ye are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations; that the Trial of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, may be found unto Praise, and Honour, at the Appearing of Jesus Christ.* Such is the Nature, such the Use, such the Fruits of Adversity.

It is indeed scarce possible, that without tasting it somewhat deeply, any Man should become in good Measure either wise or good. He must be very ignorant of himself, of his own Temper and Inclinations.

Inclinations, of the Strength and Force of his Reason, who hath not met with some Crosses to try himself and them with: The greater Part of Things he must little understand, who hath not experienced the worst Part: He can be no good Pilot in Matters of human Life, who hath not some Time sailed in a rough Sea, in foul Weather, among Sands and Shelves: He could have no good Opportunity of employing thoroughly, or improving his Wit, his Courage, his Industry, who hath had no Straits to extricate himself from, no Difficulties to surmount, no Hardships to sustain: The Virtues of Humility, of Patience, of Contentedness, must be unknown to him, to whom no Disgraces, no Wants, no Pains have arrived, by well enduring which, these are planted in the Soul: Scarce can he be charitable or compassionate to others, who never himself hath felt any Distress: Our Saviour Himself *suffered Tribulation*, that He might be *merciful*, and *disposed to succour the Afflicted*. And how can he express his Love to GOD, who is not (in Submission to GOD's Will, and for his Sake) put to suffer any Thing grievous, or want any Thing desirable? When can he employ any great Faith or Hope in GOD, who never hath any visible Need of Succour from Him, who hath other Aids to confide in? How can he thoroughly relish Spiritual Things, whose Appetites are glutted with other Delights? What but Deprivation of these Things can lay open the Vanity, the Deceitfulness and Slipperiness of them? What but the Want of these Satisfactions can drive us to seek our Felicity elsewhere? When *the Deceit of Riches* possesseth us, how can we judge right of Things? When their Snares entangle us, and their Clogs encumber us, how can we be free in doing Good? When

When Abundance fatneth our Hearts, and Ease softneth our Spirits, and Success puffeth up our Minds; when Pride, Sensuality, and Sloth, the almost inseparable Adherents to large Estates, continually insinuate themselves into us, what Wisdom, what Virtue are we like to have?

SEEING then Adversity is so wholesome and useful, the Remedy of so great Mischiefs, the Cause of so great Benefits, why should we displeased therewith? To be displeased therewith, is to be displeased with that which is most needful, most convenient for us; to be displeased that we are rescued from Errors and Vices, with all their Train of Miseries and Mischiefs, that we are not detained under the Reign of Folly and Wickedness, that we are not inevitably made Fools and Beasts. To be disgusted with Providence for Affliction or Poverty, is no other than as if we should be angry with our Physician for administering a Purge, or prescribing Abstinence to us; as if we should fret at our Chirurgeon for searching our Wounds, or applying needful Corrosives; as if we should complain of the Hand which draweth us from a Precipice, or *pulleth us out of the Fire*. "Many Benefits (saith *Seneca*) have a sad and rough Countenance, as to burn and cut in order to healing:" Such a Benefit of God is Adversity to us; and as such with a thankful Mind should we receive it.

If with a diligent Observation we consult Experience, we shall find, that as many have great Cause to bewail, that they have been rich, that they have been blinded and corrupted with Prosperity, that they have *received their Consolation here*; so many have great Reason to be glad, that they have been poor, that they have been disappointed,

pointed, that they have tasted the bitter Cup; it having instructed and corrected them; it having rendered them sober and serious, industrious and frugal, mindful of God, and devout towards Him: And what we may rejoice in, when past, why should we not bear contentedly when present? Why should not the Expectation of such good Fruits satisfy us?

WHY should not such a Condition, being so plainly better in itself, seem also better unto us? We cannot, if we are reasonable, but approve it in our Judgment; why then are we not fully reconciled to it in our Affection?



S. E. R.



S E R M O N IV.



PHIL. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatsoever State I am, there-
with to be content.*

5. **B**UT farther: Let our State be what it will, good or bad, joyful or unpleasant, we may yet consider, that it cannot be desperate, it may not be lasting; for there is not any necessary Connection between the present and the future; wherefore, as the present, being momentary, can little trouble us, so the future, being uncertain, should not dismay us. As no Man reasonably can be elevated with Confidence in a good State, presuming on its Duration, (*Boast not thyself of Tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a Day may bring forth;*) so no Man should be dejected for a bad one, in Suspicion that it will abide long; seeing neither (considering the frequent Vicissitudes that occur) is in itself stable, and the Continuance of each ab-
solutely

solutely dependeth on GOD's arbitrary Disposal; and as GOD often doth overturn Prosperity, to human Judgment most firmly grounded, so He most easily can redress the most forlorn Adversity; and, being especially *the Helper of the Helpless*, He doth frequently perform it. *He casteth down the Mighty from their Seat, and exalteth the Humble and Meek: He sendeth the Rich empty away, and filleth the Hungry with good Things: He maketh sore, and bindeth up; He woundeth, and his Hands make whole.*

CONSIDERING therefore the Reason of Things, and the Nature of GOD, if our State be at present sorrowful, we have more Reason to hope for its Amendment, than to fear its Continuance. If indeed Things went on in a fatal Track, merely according to a stiff and unalterable Necessity; if there were no Remedy from GOD's Providence, or Support by his Grace to be expected, (although even then Complaint would be vain, because Fortune and Fate are deaf) yet our Infirmary might somewhat excuse that idle Proceeding; but since *not a Sparrow falleth to the Ground, not a Hair of our Head perisheth*, nothing at all passeth otherwise than by the voluntary Disposition of a most wise and gracious GOD; since He doth always strictly view, and is very sensible of our Grievs; yea doth in a Manner sympathize with them, (according to those patheticall Expressions in the Prophets, *His Bowels found, and are troubled: His Heart is turned within Him: In all their Afflictions He was afflicted*.) Since He farther hath by Promise obliged Himself to care for us, to support and succour us, we have all Reason to hope, yea firmly to believe (if at least we can find in our Hearts to hope and to believe, that we shall, as soon as it is good and expedient for us, find Relief and Ease; we shall have

that *seasonable Succour*, that *seasonable Succour*, of which the Apostle to the *Hebrews* speaketh.

HOPE lieth at the Bottom of the worst Condition that can be: *The Poor* (saith *Job's Friend*) *bath Hope*; and the Rich can have no more; the future being equally close to both: The one can have no greater Assurance to keep what he hath, than the other hath to get what he needeth; yea clearly the Poor hath the Advantage in the Case, for GOD hath more declared, that He will relieve the poor Man's Want, than that He will preserve the rich Man's Store: If then we have in every Condition a Hope, why do we grieve as those who have no Hope? Having ever ready the best Anchor that can be to rest upon, (for in this rolling Sea of human Affairs, there is no firmer Anchor than Hope) why do we let our Minds be tossed with discontentful Sollicitudes and Fears? Why do we not rather (as the Apostle enjoineth) *rejoice in Hope*, than grieve in Despair? Why do we not (as the Prophet adviseth) *hope, and wait quietly for the Salvation of the LORD*? The Effect of so reposing ourselves on GOD's Providence would be Content and Peace, according to that of the Prophet, *Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is stayed in Thee*.

IT is very observable, that most Discontent ariseth not from the Sense of incumbent Evil, but from Suspicion or Fear of somewhat to come: Although GOD at present dispenseth a Competency of Food and Raiment, although we are in a tolerable Condition, and feel no Extremity of Want or Pain; yet not descrying the Way of future Provision for us, answerable to our Desires, we trouble ourselves; which Demeanour implieth great Ignorance and Infidelity: We must have somewhat in Hand, or we cannot trust GOD for the future:

This is that which our Saviour caution'd against, *Take no Thought for the Morrow, for the Morrow shall take Thought for the Things of itself, sufficient to the Day is the Evil thereof*: An Advice no less pious, than full of Reason and Wisdom; for what a Folly is it to anticipate that Evil we would avoid; then, when we earnestly desire to put off Sorrow, to pull it toward us; to feel that Mischief which possibly shall never be; to give it a Being in our Fancy, which it may never have in Nature? Could we follow this Advice, never resenting Evils before they come, never pre-judging God's Providence, constantly depending on the Divine Care, not taking false Alarms, and trembling at Things which shall never come near us, not being disturbed with panick Fears, no Discontent could ever seize upon us, for the present is ever supportable; our Mind cannot be overwhelmed by the Pangs of a transitory Moment.

6. BUT farther, suppose our Condition will certainly hold on, yet consider it soon will cease; since we are mortal, our Evils cannot be perpetual, we cannot long be infested with them.

As it may embitter all the Prosperity in the World, to consider that it is fading and short-lived, that its Splendor is but a Blaze, its Pleasure but a Flash, its Joy but as the crackling of Thorns; so it should sweeten any Adversity, to remember that it is passing away, and suddenly will be gone. Put the worst Case that can be; that those Things which cause our Displeasure, should continue thro' our whole Life; yet our Life itself will soon be spun out, and with it all our worldly Evils will vanish. What is said of ourselves must be applied to them, *They flee like a Shadow, and continue not; they are Winds passing and coming not again; they are Vapours* appearing

appearing for a little Time, and vanishing away; they wither like Grass, and fade away as a Leaf; they may die before us, they cannot out-live us: Our Life is but a Hand-Breadth, and can then our Evils have any vast Bulk? Our Age is as Nothing, and can any Crosses therein be any great Matter? How can any Thing so very short be very intolerable?

WE have but a narrow Strait of Time to pass over, and we shall land on the firm and vast Continent of Eternity; when we shall be freed from all the troublesome Agitations, from all the perilous Storms, from all the nauseous Qualms of this Navigation: Death (which may be very near, which cannot be far off) is a sure Haven from all the Tempests of Life, a safe Refuge from all the Persecutions of the World, an infallible Medicine of all the Diseases of our Mind, and of our State; it will enlarge us from all Restraints, it will discharge all our Debts, it will ease us from all our Toils, it will stifle all our Cares, it will veil all our Disgraces, it will still all our Complaints, and bury all our Disquiets, it will wipe away all Tears from our Eyes, and all Sorrow from our Hearts, it perfectly will level all Conditions, setting the High and Low, the Rich and Poor, the Wise and Ignorant all together upon even Ground, smothering all the Pomp and Glories, swallowing all the Wealth and Treasures of the World.

IT is therefore but holding out a while, and all our Molestation will expire: Time certainly will cure us, but it is better that we should owe that Benefit to Faith, and let it presently comfort us.

SERIOUS Reflection upon our Mortality, is, upon many Accounts, a powerful Antidote against

Discontent, being apt to extirpate the Causes thereof.

It is because we admire these worldly Things, that we so much grieve for the Want of them: This will quell that Admiration; for how can we admire them, if we consider how transitory they are? How can we deem them much worth, when we must very soon quite part with them?

How can we dote upon the World, seeing *the World* (as St. John saith) *passeth away, and the Desire thereof?*

How can we value any worldly Glory, since *all the Glory of Men* is (as St. Peter telleth us) *as the Flower of the Grass*; since (as the Psalmist saith) *Man in Honour abideth not, but is like the Beasts that perish?*

How can we set our Heart on Riches, considering that *Riches are not for ever, nor can* (as the wise Man saith) *deliver from Death*; that (as St. James admonisheth) *the rich Man fadeth in his Ways*; that it may be said to any rich Man, as it was to him in the Gospel, *Thou Fool, this Night shall thy Life be required of thee; and what thou hast prepared, to whom shall it fall?* How can we fancy Pleasure, seeing however we eat, or drink, or play, *the Morrow we die?*

How can we admire any secular Wisdom and Knowledge, seeing it is true of every Man, that *his Breath goeth forth, he returneth to his Earth, in that very Day his Thoughts perish*; particularly it is seen that wise Men die no otherwise than as the foolish and brutish Person perisheth; and *there is no Work,*

Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave, whither we are going?

Do we admire the Condition of those, who, upon the Stage, appear in the State of Kings, act the Part of wealthy Men, talk gravely and wisely like Judges or Philosophers for an Hour or two? If we do not admire those Shadows and Mockeries of State, why do we admire any Appearances upon this Theatre of the World, which are scarce a whit less deceitful, or more durable than they?

Is it an envious or disdainful Regret at the Advantages of others before us, (as we conceit, no more worthy than ourselves) that gnaweth our Heart? Is it, that such Persons are more wealthy, more honourable, in greater Favour or Repute than we? The Consideration how little Time those slender Pre-eminences will last, may (if better Remedies want due Efficacy) serve toward rooting out that Disease: The Psalmist doth several Times prescribe it, *Fret not thyself* (saith he) *against Evil Doers, neither be thou envious against the Workers of Iniquity; for they shall soon be cut down like the Grass, and wither as the green Herb*: And again, *Be not afraid when one is made rich, and when the Glory of his House is increased; for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away, his Glory shall not descend after him*. So whatever doth breed Discontent, the Reflection upon our mortal State may be an Help to remove it.

7. I SHALL in Reference to our Condition, and the Nature of those Things which cause our Discontent, purpose but one Consideration more, What is that we want or wait for? Is it any Good we want, which by our Industry we can procure; is it any Evil that afflicteth us, which by the like

Means we can evade? If it be so, why then do we not vigorously apply ourselves to the Business; why do we not, instead of ineffectual Complaints, use the Means offered for our Relief.

BUT if we grieve, because we cannot obtain some Good above our Reach, or decline some unavoidable Evil, what do we thereby but papably express our Folly, and wilfully heighten our Woe; adding voluntary Displeasure to the Heap of necessary Want or Pain; impressing more deeply on ourselves the Sense of them? In such a Case Patience is instead of a Remedy, which, though it do not thoroughly cure the Malady, yet it a'leviatheth it, preventing many bad Symptoms.

BUT farther to allay our Discontents, let us consider the World and general State of Men here.

I. LOOK first upon the World, as it is commonly ordered by Men: Thou perhaps art displeased, that thou dost not prosper therein, that thou dost not share in the Goods of it; that thy Pretences are not satisfied, and thy Designs fail; this thou dost take to be somewhat hard and unequal; and therefore art grieved. But if thou art wise, thou shouldest not wonder; if thou art good, thou shouldest not be vexed; for thou hast not, perhaps, any Capacity for this World, as it is thy Temper and Disposition are not framed to suit with its Way; thy Principles and Rules clash with it, thy Resolutions and Designs do not well comport with Prosperity here; thou canst not, or wilt not use the Means needful to compass worldly Ends: Thou perhaps hast a meek, quiet, modest, sincere, steady Disposition; thou canst not be pragmatical and boisterous, eager and fierce, importunately

tunately troublesome, intolerably confident, unaccountably various: Thou hast certain Notions about Right and Wrong, certain Fancies about another World, which thou dost stily adhere to, and which have an Influence upon thy Actions: Thou hast a squeamish Conscience, which cannot relish this, cannot digest that advantageous Course of Proceeding: Thou hast a Spice of Generosity, which maketh divers profitable Ways of Acting (such as Forging and Feigning, supplanting others by Detraction and Calumny, soothing and flattering People) to be unworthy of thee: Thou art resolved to observe strict Rules of Justice, of Humanity, of Charity; to speak as thou meanest, to do as thou wouldst be done to, to wrong no Man, to consider the Case of other Men as thine own: Thou carriest on thy Designs by fair Ways, nor canst be drawn to use any other, how seemingly needful soever, which savour of Fraud, Violence, any Sort of Wrong or Baseness: Thou art, in fine, like *Helvidius Priscus* in thy Dealings, *per-vicax recti*, wilfully honest: Such an one perhaps thou art, and such is thy Way: And canst thou hope to be any Body? Shall such a conscientious Simpleton pretend to any Thing here? No, thou art here *piscis in arido*, out of thy Element; this World is not for thee to thrive in.

2. THIS World is for Worldlings to possess: *It was* (say the Rabbins) *made for the Presumptuous*; although GOD did not design it for them, yet Men have almost made it so: They are best qualified to thrive in it, who can lustily bustle and scramble; who can shrewdly over-reach and undermine others; those slippery wily Artists, who can veer any whither with any Wind; those Men of impregnable Confidence, who can insist upon any Pretences; who can be indefatigably and irresistibly urgent,
nor

nor will be repulsed or baffled by any Means; those who have a Temper so lax and supple, that they can bend it to any Compliance advantageous to them; who have a Spirit so limber, that they can stretch it any whither; who have Face enough, and Conscience little enough to do any Thing; who have no certain Principles, but such as will sort with their Interests: *Behold, these* (saith the Psalmist) *prosper in the World, and increase in Riches; they are not in Trouble as other Men, neither are they plagued like other Men; their Eyes stand out with Fatness, they have more than Heart could wish.*

BUT for thee, why dost thou jumble such Inconsistencies together, as the eager Desire of this, and the Hopes of another World? It becometh not such a Gallant to whine and pule. If thou wilt be brave, be brave indeed; be not double-hearted; think not of arriving to the Happiness of the other World, and attaining Prosperity in this. Leave rather this World to those who are more fit for it, who venture so much, and take such Pains for it: Be thou satisfied with the Consequences of thy virtuous Resolutions and Proceedings; if it be worth thy while to live innocently, modestly and conscientiously, do it, and be satisfied; follow effectually the holy Patriarchs and Apostles, who forsook all, and chearfully went whither Conscience and Duty called them; if thou art not willing to do so, why dost thou pretend to the same Principles, or hope for the like Rewards? But leaving the Consideration of the World, as Man hath made it; consider, that this World is not in its Nature or Design, a Place of perfect Ease; we came not hither to do our Will, or enjoy our Pleasure; we are not born to pick our Condition here: No, this World is a Place of Banishment from our first Country,

Country, and the original Felicity we were designed to; this Life is a State of Travel toward another better Country, and well it is for us, as Exiles and Travellers, if we can find any tolerable Accommodation: It should not be strange to us, if in this our Pilgrimage we meet with rough Passages, foul Ways, hard Lodging, scant or coarse Fare; if we complain of such Things, we do not consider where we are, whence we came, whither we are going; we forget that we are the Sons of *Adam*, the Heirs of Sin and Sorrow, who have forfeited our Rest and Joy upon Earth; we consider not, how unavoidable the Effects are of that fatal Condemnation and Curse, which followed our first Transgression; we mind not that the Perfection and Purity of the Blessings we have lost is not to be found on this Side the celestial Paradise.

3. THIS Life is a State of Probation and Exercise, like that (which prefigured it) of GOD's People in the Wilderness, wherein GOD leadeth us through many Difficulties and Hazards, in many Wants and Hardships, to humble and prove us, in order to the fitting us for another more happy State.

No *Temptation therefore* (or Affliction) can seize upon us, but such as is human; that is, such as is natural and proper to Men: It is the Consideration which *St. Paul* useth to comfort and support us in Troubles; and a plainly good one it is; for seeing *Man* (as *Eliphaz* saith) is born to Trouble, as the Sparks fly upward; that Nothing is more natural to any Thing, than Trouble to us; if we are displeased therewith, we are in Effect displeased that we are Men; it implieth, that we gladly would put off our Nature; we grieve that we are come to live in this World, and as well might we be vexed that
we

we are not Angels, or that we are not yet in Heaven, which is the only Place exempt from Trouble, where alone *there is no Sorrow, no Clamour, no Pain.*

It hath always been, and it will ever be an universal Complaint, that the Life of Man and Trouble are individual Companions; that our State here is nothing but a Combination of various Evils, (made up of Cares, of Labours, of Dangers, of Disappointments, of Discords, of Diseases, of manifold Pains and Sorrows;) that all Ages, from wailing Infancy to querulous Decrepidness, and all Conditions, from the careful Sceptre to the painful Spade, are fraught with many great Inconveniences peculiar to each of them; that all the Face of the Earth is overspread with Mischiefs, as with a general Deluge: This the Experience of all Times loudly proclaimeth; for what are all Histories but continual Registers of the Evils incident to Men; what do they describe, but Wars and Slaughters, Mutinies and Seditions, Tumults and Confusions, Devastations and Ruins? What do they tell us, but of Men furiously striving together, circumventing, spoiling, destroying one another? What do we daily hear reported, but cruel Broils, bloody Battles, and tragical Events; great Numbers of Men slain, wounded, hurried into Captivity; Cities sacked and rased, Countries harrassed and depopulated, Kingdoms and Commonwealths overturned? What do we see before us, but Men carking, toiling, bickering; some worn out with Labour, some pining away for Want, some groaning under Pain? And amidst so many common Miseries and Misfortunes, is it not absurd for us impatiently to bemoan our particular Crosses?

4. AGAIN, If we more particularly survey the States of other Men, (of our Neighbours all about us) and compare our Case with theirs, our Condition can hardly appear to us so bad, but that we have Associates therein; many as ill, many far worse bestead than ourselves. How many of our Brethren may we observe conflicting with extreme Penury and Distress; how many undergoing continual hard Drudgeries to maintain their Lives; how many sorely pinched with Hunger and Cold; how many tortured with grievous Sickness; how many oppressed with Debt; how many shut up under close Restraint; how many detained in horrible Slavery; how many by the wasting Rage of War rifled of their Goods, driven from their Homes, dispossessed of all Subsistence? How many, in fine, passing their Lives in all the Inconveniences of rude, beggarly, sordid and savage Barbarism? And who of us have, in any Measure, tasted of these, or of the like Calamities? Yet are these Sufferers, all of them, the same in Nature with us; many of them deserve as well, divers of them better than ourselves: What Reason then can we have to conceive our Case so hard, or to complain thereof? Were we the only Persons exposed to Trouble, could we truly say with the Prophet, *Behold, if there be any Sorrow like my Sorrow*; we might seem unhappy: But since we have so much Company in our Woe; since it is so ordinary a Thing to be poor and distressed; it is plainly reasonable and just, that we should, without Murmuring, take, and bear our Lot: For what Privilege have we to alledge, that we rather than others should be untouched by the Grievances, to which Mankind is obnoxious? Are we not Men framed of the same Mould; are we not Sinners guilty of like Offences, with the meanest Peasant, the poorest Beggar, the most wretched Slave? Then it is a perverse and unjust Frowardness

ness to be displeased with our Lot: We may, if we please, pity the common State of Men, but we cannot reasonably complain of our own.

5. WE are indeed apt to look upward toward those few, who, in supposed Advantages, (in Wealth, Dignity, or Reputation) precede us; but seldom do we cast down our Eyes on those innumerable many, who lie beneath us: Hence so few are satisfied with their Condition, an epidemical Eye-sore molesting every Man; for there is no Man, of whatever Condition, who is not in Something outstripped by others: He therefore looking with an evil Eye on such Persons, and with senseless Disregard passing over the rest of Men, doth easily thereby lose his Ease and Satisfaction: Whereas if we would consider the Case of most Men, we should see abundant Reason to be satisfied with our own; if we would feel the Calamities of our Neighbours, we should little resent our own Crosses.

IF with any Heedfulness we view Persons and Things before us, we shall easily discern, that what seemeth great and weighty, is indeed comparatively small and light; that we have our full Share in Good, and no more than our Part in Evil; that *Socrates* had Reason to suppose, that "If we should bring into one common Stock all our Mishaps, so that each should receive his Portion of them, gladly the most would take up their own, and go their Ways;" that consequently it is both Iniquity and Folly in us to complain of our Lot.

6. IF we would diligently compare our State with the State even of those, whom we are apt most to envy, it would afford Matter of Consolation. What is the State of the greatest Persons, (of the World's Grandees) but a State encompassed with
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Snares and Temptations; which, without extreme Caution, and Constancy, and Command of all Appetites and Passions, cannot be avoided? What but a State of pompous Troubles; of living in continual Noise and Stir, subject to the Urgency of Business, and the Tedioufness of Ceremony; of being abused by perfidious Servants, and mocked by vile Flatterers; of being exposed to common Censure and Obloquy, to Misrepresentation, Misconstruction and Slander, having the Eyes of all Men intent upon their Actions, and as many severe Judges as watchful Spectators; of being pestered and pursued with Pretences, with Suits, with Complaints, the necessary Result whereof is to displease many, to satisfy few; of being frequently engaged in Resentments of Ingratitude, of Treachery, of Neglects, of Defects in Duty, and Breaches of Trust toward them; of being constrained to comply with the Humours and Opinions of Men; of anxious Care to keep, and Fear of losing all; of wanting the most solid Comforts of Life, true Friendship, free Conversation, Privacy and Retiredness: In fine, of being paid with false Coin for all their Cares and Pains, receiving for them scarce any Thing more, but empty Shews of Respects, and hollow Acclamations: (Whence the Psalmist might well say, *Surely Men of low Degree are Vanity, and Men of high Degree a Lye*; a Lye, for that their State cheateth us, appearing so specious, yet being really so inconvenient and troublesome.) Such is the State of the greatest Men; such as hath made wise Princes weary of themselves, and ready to acknowledge, that if Men knew the Weight of a Crown, none would take it up; such indeed, as in sober Judgment, we cannot prefer before the most narrow and inferior Fortune: How then can we reasonably be displeased with our Condition, when we may even pity Emperors and

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Kings, when, in Reality, we are as well, perhaps much better than they?

7. FARTHER, it may induce us to be content, to consider what commonly hath been the Lot of good Men in the World: We shall, if we survey the Histories of all Times, find the best Men to have sustained most grievous Crosses; scarce is there in Holy Scripture recorded any Person eminent and illustrious for Goodness, who hath not tasted deeply of Want and Distresses. The Apostles were pinched with all Kinds of Want, harrassed with all Sorts of Toil, exposed to all Manner of Hazards, persecuted with all Variety of Contumelies and Pains. Above all, our LORD Himself was beyond Expression *a Man of Sorrow, and acquainted with Grief*, surpassing all Men in Suffering, as He excelled them in Dignity and Virtue; extreme Poverty, *having not so much as where to lay his Head*, was his Portion; to undergo continual Labour and Travel, without any Mixture of Ease or Pleasure, was his State; in Return for the highest Good-Will, and choicest Benefits, to receive most cruel Hatred, and grievous Injuries, to be loaded with the bitterest Reproaches, the foulest Slanders, the sorest Pains which Malice could invent, or Rage inflict, this was his Lot: *Am I poor?* so, may one say, was He to Extremity: *Am I slighted of the World?* so was He notoriously: *Am I crossed in my Designs?* so was He continually; all his most painful Endeavours having small Effect: *Am I deserted or betrayed of Friends?* so was He, by those who were most intimate, and most obliged to Him: *Am I reviled, slandered, misused?* was not He so beyond all Comparison?

HAVE all these, and many more, of whom the World was not worthy, undergone all Sorts of Inconvenience,

convenience, being *destitute, afflicted, tormented*: And shall we be sorry to be found in such Company? *Having such a Cloud of Martyrs, let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us.* Is it not an Honour, should it not be a Comfort to us, that we do, in Condition, resemble them? If God hath thus dealt with those, who of all Men have been dearest to Him, shall we take it ill that He, in any Manner, dealeth so with us? Can we pretend, can we even wish to be used better than God's First-born, and our Lord Himself hath been? If we do, are we not monstrously arrogant; especially considering, that it is not only ordinary, but the peculiar Character of God's Chosen, and Children, to be often crossed, checked, and corrected? Even *Pagans* have observed it, and avowed there is great Reason for it; "God (saith *Seneca*) hath a fatherly Mind toward good Men, and strongly loveth them — therefore, after the Manner of severe Parents, He educateth them hardly." The Apostle doth in express Terms assure us thereof; for *whom* (saith he) *the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every Son whom He receiveth. If ye endure Chastning, God dealeth with you as with Sons; but if ye be without Chastisement, whereof all (that is, all good Men, and genuine Sons of God) are Partakers, then are ye Bastards, and not Sons.* Would we be expunged from the Number of God's Children; would we be divested of his special Good-Will? If not, why do we not gladly embrace, and willingly sustain Adversity, which is by Himself declared so peculiar a Badge of his Children, so constant a Mark of his Favour? It is peculiarly the Lot of Christians, in Conformity to their afflicted Saviour; they are herein *predestinated to be conformable to his Image; to this they are appointed.* Let no Man (saith *St. Paul*) be moved by these Afflictions; for ye know that

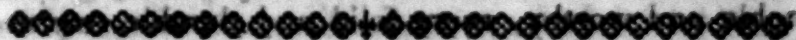
we are appointed thereunto: To this they are called, If when ye do well (saith St. Peter) and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God; for even hereunto were ye called: They are by Profession Bearers of the Cross; (If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross and follow Me: Every one that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer Persecution) by this are they admitted into the State of Christians: (By many Afflictions we must enter the Kingdom of Heaven.) This doth qualify them for enjoying the glorious Rewards, which their Religion propoundeth: We are Co-heirs with Christ; so that, if we suffer together, we shall also be glorified with Him; if we endure, we shall also reign with Him.

In fine, seeing Adversity is, as hath been declared, a Thing so natural to all Men, so common to most Men, so incident to great Men, so proper to good Men, so peculiar to Christians, we have great Reason to observe the Apostle's Advice: *Beloved, wonder not concerning the fiery Trial, which is to try you, as if some strange Thing happened to you; we should not wonder at it as a strange Thing, that we are engaged in any Trouble here; we are consequently not to be affected with it as a Thing strange.*





S E R M O N V.



PHIL. iv. 11.

*I have learned in whatsoever State I am, there-
with to be content.*

MOREOVER, considering the Nature of this Duty itself, may be a great Aid to the Practice of it.

1. IT is itself a sovereign Remedy, for all Poverty, and all Suffering; removing or allaying all the Mischief they can do us. It is well said by St. Austin, "It is no Matter what, but how a Man suffereth?" The chief Mischief Adversity can do us, is to render us discontent; in that consisteth all the Venom thereof; which thereby being voided, Adversity cannot be noxious to us; all Distraction and Disturbance from it being prevented. He that hath his Desires moderated to a Temper suitable with his Condition, that hath his Passions composed

agreeably to his Circumstances, what can make any Impression on him, or render him any-wise miserable? He that taketh himself to have enough, what doth he need? What can the largest Wealth, or highest Prosperity yield more? He that hath this essential Ingredient of Felicity, is he not in Effect most fortunate? Is not at least his Condition as good as that of the most prosperous?

2. As good do I say? Yea, is it not plainly much better than can arise from any secular Prosperity? For Satisfaction springing from virtuous Disposition of Mind is far more precious, more noble and worthy, more solid and durable, more sweet and delectable, than that which any Possession or Fruition of worldly Goods can afford: The *Incorruptibility* (as St. Peter speaketh) *of a meek and quiet Spirit is before GOD of great Price; before GOD*, that is, according to the most upright and certain Judgment, it is the most precious and valuable Thing in the World: "There is (the Philosopher could say) no Spectacle more worthy of GOD, than a good Man gallantly combating with ill Fortune." Not to be discomposed in Mind, not to fret when all Things flow prosperously, is no great Sign of Wisdom, or Argument of Goodness; it cannot be reckoned an Effect of sound Judgment, or virtuous Affection, but a natural Consequent of such a State: But when there are urgent Temptations to Displeasure, when Sense and Fancy provoke to Murmuring, then to be satisfied in our Mind, then to keep our Passions in Order, then to maintain good Humour, then to restrain our Tongue from Complaint, and to govern our Demeanour sweetly, this is indeed honourable and handsome; to see a worthy Man sustain Crosses, Wants, Disgraces with Equanimity and Chearfulness, is a goodly Thing: Such a Person

son to a judicious Mind appeareth in a far more honourable State, than any prosperous Man; his Virtue shining in the Dark is far more bright and fair: *This* (as St. Peter saith, in a like Case) *is thankworthy, if a Man for Conscience toward God suffereth Grief*; if, in our Case (we may say after him) a Man out of conscientious Deference to God's Will, doth contentedly undergo Adversity, this God is ready to take for an Obligation on Himself, and will be disposed, in a Manner to *thank him* (or to reward him) for it: This indeed amounteth to a Demonstration that such a Person is truly wise, and really good: So is the Satisfaction of a contented poor Man more worthy: And it is no less more sweet and comfortable, than that of any rich Man, pleasing himself in his Enjoyments; Contentedness satisfieth the Mind of the one, Abundance doth only satiate the Appetites of the other; the former is the Complacence of a Man; the latter is gross and dull, like the Sensuality of a Beast; the Delight of that sinketh deep into the Heart, the Pleasure of this doth only float in the Senses or Fancy: The poor good Man's Joy is wholly his own, a lovely Child of Reason and Virtue; the rich Man's Pleasure cometh from without, and is thrust into him by sensible Objects.

HENCE is the Satisfaction of contented Adversity far more constant, solid and durable, than that of Prosperity; it abideth in the Mind, and cannot easily be driven thence by any corporeal Impressions; whereas the other, issuing from Sense, is subject to all the Changes inducible from the restless Commotions of outward Causes: Whence the Satisfaction proceeding from Reason and Virtue, the longer it stayeth the sweeter it groweth, turning into Habit, and working Nature to an Agreement with it; whereas usually the Joys of Prosperity soon degenerate

rate into Fastidiousness, and terminate in Bitterness. Nothing indeed can affect the Mind with a truer Pleasure, than the very Conscience of discharging our Duty toward God in bearing Hardship, imposed by his Providence, willingly and well. We have therefore much Reason not only to acquiesce in our Straits, but to be glad of them, seeing they yield us an Opportunity of immediately obtaining Goods more excellent and more desirable, than any prosperous or wealthy Man can easily have, since they furnish us with Means of acquiring and exercising a Virtue worth the most ample Fortune; yea, justly preferable to the best Estate in the World; a Virtue, which indeed doth not only render any Condition tolerable, but sweeteneth any Thing, yea sanctifieth all States, and turneth all Occurrences into Blessings.

3. EVEN the sensible Smart of Adversity is by Contentedness tempered and eased; the stiller and quieter we lie under it, the less we feel its Violence: It is Tumbling and Tossing that stirreth the Humours, and driveth them to the Parts most apt to be affected with them: Where the Mind is calm, and the Passions settled, the Pain of any Grievance is less acute, less sensible.

4. WHENCE if others in our Distress are uncharitable to us, refusing the Help they might or should afford, toward the rescuing us from it; we hereby may be great Benefactors to ourselves; we should need no *Anodyne* to be ministred from without, no Succour to come from any Creature, if we would not be wanting to ourselves, in hearkning to Grace and Reason, and enjoying the Consolation which they afford. In doing this, we are more cruel to ourselves, than any spiteful Enemy or treacherous Friend

Friend can be; no Man can so molest us, as we do ourselves by admitting our fostering Discontent.

5. THE contented bearing of our Condition is also the most ready Means of bettering it, and of removing the Pressures we lie under.

It is partly so in a natural Way, as disposing us to embrace and employ the Advantages which occur thereto; for as Discontent blindeth Men so they cannot descry the Ways of Escape from Evil, it discourageth them from Endeavouring to help themselves, it depriveth them of many Succours and Expedients, which Occasion would afford for their Relief; so he that being undisturbed in his Spirit hath his Eyes open and his Courage up, and all his natural Powers in Order, will be always ready and able to do his best, to act vigorously, to snatch any Opportunity, and employ any Means, toward the freeing himself from what appeareth gievous to him.

UPON a supernatural Account Content is yet more efficacious to the same Purpose; for chearful Submission to GOD's Will doth please Him much, doth strongly move Him to withdraw his afflicting Hand, doth effectually induce Him to advance us into a most comfortable State: Of all Virtues there is none more acceptable to GOD than Patience. GOD will take it well at our Hands if we contentedly receive from his Hand the worst Things: It is a monstrous Thing not to receive Prosperity with a grateful Sense, but it is heroical with the same Mind to receive Things unpleasant: He that doth so *suffereth Loss as a Man, but is crowned as a Lover of GOD.*

Be humbled (saith St. Peter) under the mighty Hand of GOD, that He may exalt you in due Time (*in season*, when it is opportune and seasonable) and Be humbled (saith St. James) before the LORD; and He will exalt you. When Men are cast down, then thou shalt say there is lifting up, and He will save the humble Person. GOD with favourable Pity hearkeneth to the Groans of them who are humbly contrite under his Hand, and reverently tremble at his Word; He reviveth the Spirit of the humble; He is nigh to the broken of Heart, and saveth such as are of a contrite Spirit; He healeth the broken in Heart, and bindeth up their Wounds; He proclaimeth Blessedness to the poor in Spirit, and to those that mourn, because they shall find Comfort; all which Declarations are made concerning those who bear Adversity with a submissive and contented Mind; and we see them effectually performed in the Cases of Ahab, of the Ninivites, of Nebuchadnezzar, of Manasses, of Hezekiah, of David; of all Persons mentioned in holy Scripture, upon whom Adversities had such kindly Operations. But Discontent and Impatience offend GOD, and provoke Him to continue his Judgments, yea to increase them: To be fullen and stubborn is the sure Way to render our Condition more intolerable: For, who hath hardened himself against GOD and prospered? Those, who (like the Israelites) have been smitten in vain as to any quiet Submission or Conversion to GOD, what have they but plunged themselves deeper into Wretchedness?

It is indeed to quell our haughty Stomach, to check our froward Humour, to curb our impetuous Desires, to calm our disorderly Passions, to suppress our eager Affection toward these worldly Things; in short, to work a contented Mind in

us, that GOD ever doth inflict Hardships on us, that He crosseth us in our Projects, that He detaineth us in any troublesome State; until this be atchieved, as Relief would really be no Blessing to us, so GOD (except in judgment) will no-wise grant it; it would be a cruel Mercy for Him to do it: If therefore we do wish ever to be in a good Case as to this World, let us learn to be contented in a bad one: Having got this Disposition firmly rooted in our Hearts, we are qualified for Deliverance; nor will GOD fail in due Season to perform for us what He so often hath declared and promised; his Nature disposeth Him, his Word hath engaged Him to help and comfort us.

THESE are the most proper Inducements to Contentedness; which considering (in the Light of Reason and holy Scripture) the Nature of the Things, suggested my Meditation: There are some other Means, some general, some particular, which are very conducive thereto.

I. A CONSTANT Endeavour to live well, and to maintain a good Conscience: He that doth this can hardly be dismay'd, or disturbed with any Occurrence here; this will yield a Man so firm a Satisfaction, as will bear down the Sense of any incumbent Evils; this will beget such Hope in GOD, as will supply the Want of all other Things, and fully satisfy us, that we have no Cause to be troubled with any Thing here: He, that by conscientious Practice hath obtained such a Hope, is prepared against all Assaults; *he will* (as the Psalmist saith) *not be affraid of any evil Tidings, for his Heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD.* Maintaining this will free us from all anxious Care, transferring it upon GOD; it will breed a sure Confidence, that He will ever be ready to supply

ply us with all Things convenient, to protect and deliver us from all Things hurtful; ensuring to us the Effect of that Promise, by the Conscience of having performed the Condition thereof: *Seek ye first the Kingdom of GOD and its Righteousness, and all these Things shall be added unto you.*

THIS was that which supported the Apostles, and kept them chearful under all that heavy Load of Distresses which lay upon them; *Our rejoicing is this (could they say) the Testimony of our Conscience, that in Simplicity and godly Sincerity—we have had our Conversation in this World.*

IT is the Want of this best Pleasure, that both rendreth the Absence of all other Pleasures grievous, and their Presence insipid; Had we a good Conscience we could not want Comfort; as we could not truly be unhappy, so we could hardly be discontent; without it no Affluence of other Things can suffice to content us. It is an evil Conscience that giveth an Edge to all other Evils, and enableth them sorely to afflict which otherwise would but slightly touch us; we become thence incapable of Comfort, seeing not only Things upon Earth to cross us, but Heaven to lower upon us; finding no visible Succour, and having no Hope from the Power invisible; yea having Reason to be discouraged with the Fear of God's Displeasure. As he that hath a powerful Enemy near, cannot abide in Peace, without anxious Fear; so he that is at Variance with the Almighty, who is ever at hand, what Quiet of Mind can he enjoy?

2. THE Contemplation of our future State is a sovereign Medicine to work Contentedness, and to cure Discontent. As Discontent easily cleaveth

to Souls, which earnestly pore upon these present Things, so if we firmly believe, seriously consider, and worthily prize the future State, we can hardly ever be discontent in regard to these Things. Considering Heaven and its Happiness, how low and mean, how unworthy of our Affection will these inferior Things appear? How unconcerned shall we be in them, and how easily thence shall we be content to want them? What, shall any of us say, doth it concern me in what Rank or Garb I pass my few Days here? What considerable Interest can I have in this uncertain and transitory State? What is any Loss, any Disgrace, any Cross in this World to me, who am a Citizen of Heaven, who have a Capacity and Hope of the immense Riches, the incorruptible Glories, the perfect and endless Joys of Eternity? This was that which sustained the holy Apostles in all their Distresses; *For this Cause* (saith St. Paul) *we faint not*——*while we look not on the Things which are seen, for the Things which are seen are temporal, but the Things which are not seen are eternal*; and I reckon (saith he again) *that the Sufferings of this present Life are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us.*

If likewise we with Faith and Seriousness consider the dismal State of those, who are eternally secluded from all Joy, who are irrecoverably condemned to utter Darkness, how tolerable, will the meanest State here appear? How vain a Thing will it then seem to dislike, or to be troubled with any worldly Thing? What, shall we say, is this Loss to the Loss of my Soul and all its Comforts for ever? What is this Want to the perpetual Want of heavenly Bliss? What is this short and faint Pain to the cruel Pangs of endless

Remorse, to the weeping and gnashing of Teeth in outward Darkness?

3. CONSTANT Prayer is an excellent Guard of Content, and is excellent Fence against Discontent.

It is such in Way of Impetration, procuring the Removal, or Alleviation of our Crosses: For GOD hath promised that *He will give good Things to those that ask Him; The LORD is nigh unto all that call upon Him in Truth; He will fulfill the Desire of them that fear Him; He also will hear their Cry, and will save them. The poor Man crieth, and the LORD heareth him, and saveth him out of all his Troubles;* the holy Scripture is full of such Declarations and Promises, assuring us of Succour upon our Supplication to GOD; whence St. Paul thus adviseth against all Sollicitude: *Be carefull for Nothing, but in every Thing by Prayer, and Supplication with Thanksgiving, let your Request be made known to GOD: And* (addeth signifying the Consequence of this Practice) *the Peace of GOD, which passeth all Understanding, shall keep your Hearts and Minds through Jesus Christ.*

It likewise performeth the same by procuring Aid from GOD, it enables us to bear all Evils well, which is really much better than a Removal of them; for that hence they become profitable to us, and Causes of present Good, and Grounds of future Reward; thus when St. Paul besought GOD for Deliverance from his Thorn in the Flesh, the Return to him was; *My Grace is sufficient for thee; for my Strength is made perfect in Weakness:* It was a greater Favour to receive an Improvement of spiritual Strength, occasioned by that Cross, than to be quite freed from it.

DEVOTION also hath of itself a special Efficacy to produce Content. As in any Distress it is a great Consolation, that we can have Recourse to a good Friend, that we may discharge our Cares into his Bosom; that we may demand Advice from him, and, if need be, request his Succour; so much more it must be a great Comfort, that we can in our Need approach to GOD, who is infinitely the most faithful, the most affectionate, the most sufficient Friend that can be; always most ready, most willing, most able to direct and to relieve us: He desires, and delights, that *in the Day of our Trouble we should seek Him*; that *we should pour forth our Hearts before Him*, that we should *cast our Burthens, and our Cares upon Him*; that we should, upon all Occasions, implore his Guidance and Aid: And complying with his Desires as we shall assuredly find a successful Event of our Devotions, so we shall immediately enjoy great Comfort and Pleasure in them.

THE GOD of all Consolation doth especially by this Channel convey his Comforts into our Hearts; his very Presence (that Presence, in which the Psalmist saith *there is a Fulness of Joy*) doth mightily warm and chear us; his holy Spirit doth in our religious Intercourse with Him insinuate a Serenity of Mind, doth kindle sweet and kindly Affections, doth scatter the gloomy Clouds of Sadness; practising it we shall be able to say with the Psalmist, *In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me thy Comforts delight my Soul.*

HUMBLY addressing ourselves to GOD, and reverently conversing with Him doth compose our Minds, and charm our Passions, doth sweeten our Humour, doth refresh and raise our Spirits

and so doth immediately breed and nourish Contentedness.

IT also strengthneth our Faith, and quickneth our Hope in GOD, whereby we are enabled to support our present Evils, and Peace of Mind doth spring up within us,

IT enflameth our Love to GOD, in Sense of his gracious Illapses, thence rendring us willing to endure any Want or Pain for his Sake, or at his Appointment.

IT in fine doth minister a ravishing Delight, abundantly able to supply the Defect of any other Pleasures, and to allay the Smart of any Pains whatever; rendring thereby the meanest Estate more acceptable than any Prosperity without it can be. So that if we be truly devout we can hardly be discontent; It is departing from GOD by a Neglect of Devotion, or by a Negligence therein, that doth expose us to the Incurfions of worldly Regret and Sorrow.

THESE are general Remedies and Duties both in this and all other Regards necessary, which yet we may be induced to perform in Contemplation of this happy Fruit (Contentedness) arising from them. Farther.

4. IT serveth toward Production of Contentedness to reflect much upon our Imperfection, Unworthiness and Guilt; so as thereby to work in our Hearts a lively Sense of them, and a hearty Sorrow for them; this will divert our Sadness into its right Channel, this will drown our lesser Grief by the Influx of a greater. It is the Nature of a greater Apprehension or Pain to swallow up

the Sense of a lesser, as he that is under a Fit of the Stone doth scarce feel a Pang of the Gout; he that is assaulted by a Wolf will not regard the Biting of a Flea. Whereas then of all Evils moral Evils are incomparably the greatest, in Nature the most ugly and abominable, in Consequence the most hurtful and horrible; seeing (in St. Chrysostome's Language) *Excepting Sin, there is Nothing grievous or terrible among human Things; not Poverty, not Sicknes, not Disgrace, not that which seemeth the most extreme of all Evils, Death itself*; seeing according to just Estimation no Evil beareth any Proportion to the Evil of Sin, if we have a due Sense thereof, we can hardly be affected with any other Accident; If we can keep our Minds intent upon the heinous Nature, and the lamentable Consequences of Sin, all other Evils cannot but seem exceedingly light and inconsiderable; we cannot but apprehend it a very silly and unhandsome Thing to resent or regard them: What (shall we then judge) is Poverty in Comparison to the Want of a good Conscience? What is Sicknes compared to Distemper of Mind, and Decay of spiritual Strength? What is any Disappointment to the being defeated and overthrown by Temptation? What any Loss to the being deprived of GOD's Love and Favour? What any Disgrace to the being out of Esteem with GOD? What any Unfaithfulness or Inconstancy of Friends to having deserted or betrayed our own Soul? What can any Danger signify to that of Eternal Misery, incurred by offending GOD? What Pressure can weigh against the Load of Guilt, or what Pain equal that of stinging Remorse? In fine, what Condition can be so bad as that of a wretched Sinner? Any Case sure is tolerable, is desirable, is lovely and sweet in Comparison to this: Would to GOD, may a Man in this Case say, that

I were poor as any Beggar; that I were covered all over with Blains as *Lazarus*; that I were bound to pass my Days in an Hospital or a Dungeon; might I be chained to an Oar, might I lie upon the Rack, so I were clear and innocent: *If such Thoughts and Affections reflecting on our Sin, impress* what Place can there be for Resentment of petty Crosses?

CONTRITION also upon this Score is productive of a certain Sweetness and Joy apt to allay worldly Grief: *As it worketh a salutary Repentance not to be repented of*, so it breedeth a satisfactory Comfort, which doth ever attend Repentance: He that is very sensible of his Guilt, cannot but consequently much value the Remedy thereof, Mercy; thence will spring up a chearful Satisfaction, so possessing the Heart, as to expel other Displeasures: A holy and a worldly Sadness cannot well consist together.

5. ANOTHER Instrument of Contentedness is sedulous Application of our Minds to honest Employment. Honest Studies and Cares divert our Minds, and drive sad Thoughts from them; they chear our Spirits; they yield good Fruits, which will extinguish or temper Discontent: While we are studious or active, Discontent cannot easily creep in, and soon will be stifled.

IDLENESS is the great Mother and the Nurse of Discontent; it layeth the Mind open for Melancholy to enter; it yieldeth Harbour to it, and Entertainment there; it depriveth of all the Remedies and Allays which Business affordeth.

RECIPROCALLY Discontent begetteth Idleness, and by it groweth; they are like Ice and Water,
arising

arising each out of the other : We should therefore not suffer any Sadness so to encroach upon us, as to hinder us from attending to our Business (the honest Works and Studies of our Calling) for it thereby will grow stronger and more hardly vincible.

6. It conduceth to this Purpose to contemplate and resent the publick State of Things, the Interest of the World, of our Country, of God's Church. The Sense of publick Calamities will drown that of private, as unworthy to be compared with them : The Sense of publick Calamity will allay that of particular Misfortune. How (will a wise and good Man say) can I desire to flourish, while the State is in Danger or Distress ? How can I grieve, seeing my Country is in good Condition ? Indeed,

7. ALL hearty Charity doth greatly alleviate Discontent. If we bear such a Good-Will to our Neighbour as to have a sincere Compassion of his Evils, and Complacency in his Good, our Case will not much afflict us. If we can enjoy the Prosperity, the Wealth, the Reputation of our Neighbour, by delighting in them, what can we want ; what can displease us ? If our Heart is enlarged in Pity for the Misfortunes of others, it cannot be contracted with Grief for our own : Our own Sorrow, like Water, being thus diffused, cannot be so deep but it will be more fruitful ; it will produce such Effects as will comfort and please us : It is Selfishness which maketh us so sensible of Crosses, and incapable of Comfort.

8. AGAIN, if we will attain Contentment, we must take Heed of setting our Affection upon any worldly

worldly Thing whatever, so as highly to prize it, passionately to affect it, eagerly to pursue it; so as to conceive our Happiness in any Measure to hang on it: If there be any such Thing, we shall be disappointed in the Procurement, or the Retention of it; or we shall be dissatisfied in its Enjoyment.

So to adhere in Affection to any Thing, is an adulterous Disloyalty toward our Maker and best Friend; from which it is expedient that we should be reclaimed; whence God (in just Anger, or in kind Mercy, will be apt to cross us in our Attempts to get it, or to deprive us of its Possession; whence the Displeasure will follow, which always attendeth a Separation from Things we love: But if we be suffered to obtain or to retain it, we shall soon find Dissatisfaction there; being either disgusted with some Bitterness in it (such as doth lurk in every sensible Good) or cloyed with its Lusciousness; after a small Enjoyment it will become either distasteful or insipid.

THIS, according to continual Experience, is the Nature of all Things, pleasant only to Sense or Fancy, presently to satiate: No Beauty can long please the Eye, no Melody the Ear, no Delicacy the Palate, no Curiosity the Fancy; a little Time doth waste away, a small Use doth wear out the Pleasure, which at first they afford: Novelty commendeth; Distance representeth them fair and lovely; the Want or Absence of them rendereth them desirable; but the Presence of them dulles their Grace, the Possession of them deadneth the Appetite to them.

ONLY those Things which Reason (religious and sound Reason) doth approve yield a lasting, unde-

undecaying, unalterable Satisfaction; if we set our Affections on them, we cannot fail of Content: In seeking them we cannot be disappointed; for GOD, without any Reservation or Exception, hath promised to bestow them upon those who diligently seek them: Nor can we be dispossessed of them; GOD will not take them away, and they lie beyond the Reach of any other Hand: Having them then we cannot but fully and durably be satisfied in the Fruition of them; the longer we have them, the more we shall like them; the more we taste them, the better we shall relish them: Time wasteth not, but improveth the Sense of their unfading Beauty and indefectible Sweetness.

9 WE should to this Purpose take especial Care to search our Condition, and pick thence the Good that is therein, making the best we can of it, enjoying and improving it; but what is offensive therein diminishing it, tempering it so well as we may, always forbearing to aggravate it. There are in Nature divers Simples, which have in them some Part, or some Juice very noxious, which being severed and cast away, the rest becometh wholesome Food; neither indeed is there any Thing in Nature so venomous, but that from it by Art and Industry may be extracted somewhat of good Use, when duly applied; so in most apparent Evils lieth inclosed much Good, which if we carefully separate (casting away the intermixed Dross and Refuse) we shall find Benefit, and taste Comfort thence; there is nothing so thoroughly bad, but being well ordered, and opportunely ministred, will do us much Good: So if from Poverty we cast away or bear quietly that which pincheth the Sense or grateth on the Fancy, and enjoy

enjoy the Liberty, the Leisure, the Health, the Security from Envy, Obloquy, Strife, which it affordeth, how satisfactory may it become to us? The like Conveniences are in Disgrace, Disappointment, and other such Evils, which being improved, may endear them to us: Even Sin itself (the worst of Evils, the only true Evil) may yield Benefit to us; it may render us sober and lowly in our own Eyes, devout in imploring Mercy; merciful and charitable toward others in our Censures; more laborious in our good Practice, and watchful over our Steps: And if this deadly Poison may yield Effects so exceedingly beneficial, what may other harmless, tho' unpleasant, Things do?

10. IT is a most effectual Means of producing Content, and curing Discontent, to rouse and fortify our Faith in God, by seriously reflecting upon the Arguments and Experiments, which assure us of God's particular Providence over all, over us. It is really Infidelity (in whole, or in Part, no Faith, or a small and Weak Faith) which is at the Root, as of all Sin, so particularly of Discontent: For how is it possible, did we firmly believe, and with any Measure of Attention consider, that God taketh Care of us, that He tendereth our Good, that He is ready at Hand to succour us, (how then, I say, is it possible) that we should fear any Want, or grievously resent any Thing? But we, like *St. Peter*, are of little Faith, therefore we cannot *walk on the Sea*; but in Despair sink down: Sometimes our Faith is buried in Oblivion or Carelessness; we forget, or mind not that there is a Providence; but look on Things as if they fell out casually or fatally; thence expect no Redress from Heaven, so tumble into Despair

and Disconsolateness. Sometimes because God doth not in our Time and our Way relieve or gratify us, we slip into profane Doubt, questioning in our Hearts whether He doth indeed regard us, or whether any Relief is to be expected from Him; not considering, that only God can tell when, and how it is best to proceed; that often it is not expedient our Wishes should be granted; that we are not wise enough, or just enough to choose for ourselves; that it would be a mad World, if God in his Government thereof should satisfy all our Desires.

WE forget how often God hath succoured us in our Streights; how continually He hath provided for us; how patiently He hath borne with us; what Miracles of Bounty He hath performed in our Behalf; we are like that distrustful and inconsiderate People, who *remembered not the Hand of God, nor the Day when He delivered them*; but *soon forgot his Works, and waited not for his Counsel: They forgot God their Saviour, who had done great Things in Egypt, wondrous Works in the Land of Ham, and terrible Things in the Red Sea.*

FROM such Dispositions our Discontents spring; and we cannot cure them, but by recovering from such Forgetfulness and Negligence; by shaking off such wicked Doubts and Distrust; by fixing our Hearts and Hopes on Him, who alone can help us; who is *our Strength, the Strength of our Heart, of our Life, of our Salvation.*

OF Him (to conclude) let us humbly implore, that He in Mercy would bestow upon us Grace to submit in all Things to his Will, to acquiesce in all his Dispensations, gladly to embrace and undergo

dergo whatever He allotteth to us ; in every Condition, and for all Events befalling us, heartily to adore, thank and bless Him : Even so to the Ever Blessed God, our gracious Maker and Preserver, be eternally rendered all Glory, Thanksgiving and Praise. *Amen.*





S E R M O N VI.

REJOICE EVERMORE.



I THESSAL. V. 16.

Rejoice evermore.

REJOICE *evermore*! O good Apostle, how acceptable Rules dost thou prescribe? O blessed GOD, how gracious Laws dost Thou impose? This is a Rule to which all Men should be forward to conform; this is a Law, which it may seem strange for any Man to disobey: For what can any Soul desire more than to lead a Life in continual Alacrity? Who would readily not embrace a Duty, the Observance whereof is not only pleasant, but Pleasure itself? Who is so wild as to affect a Sin, which hath nothing in it but Disease and Disgust?

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THAT Joy should be enjoined, that Sadness should be prohibited, may it not be a plausible Exception against such a Precept, that it is superfluous, seeing all the Endeavours of Men aim at nothing else, but to procure Joy, and eschew Evil: Were it not rather expedient to recommend sober Sadness, or to repress the Inclinations of Men to effuse Mirth?

So it may seem; but yet alas, if we consult Experience, or observe the World, we shall find this Precept very ill obeyed; for do we not commonly see People heavy? Do we not often hear doleful Complaints? Is not this World apparently a Stage of continual Trouble and Grief? Did not the Preacher, upon a diligent Survey of *all the Works done under the Sun*, truly proclaim, *All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit*? Where, I pray, is any full or firm Content; where is solid and durable Joy to be found?

It is true, that Men, after a confused Manner, are very eager in the Pursuit of Joy; they rove through all the Forest of Creatures, hoping to catch it either in natural Endowments and Improvements of Soul, or in the Gifts of Fortune, or in the Acquirements of Industry; in temporal Possessions, in sensual Enjoyments, in Amusements, in Gratification of their Appetites and Passions; they all hunt for it, though following a different Scent, and running in various Tracks; some in plodding for rare Notions; some compassing ambitious Projects; some in amassing Heaps of Wealth; some in overreaching Subtilties; some in wrecking their Malice, their Revenge, their Envy; some in venting frothy Conceits, bitter Scoffs, or profane Railleries; some in jovial Conversation, and quaffing the full Bowls; some in Musick and Dancing; some in Gallantry
and

and Courting; some in all Kinds of riotous Excess, and Dissoluteness; but all in vain, finding at most, instead of it, some faint Shadows, or transitory Flashes of Pleasure, which soon flag and expire; their short Enjoyment being also tempered with Regret, being easily dashed by any cross Accident, soon declining into a nauseous Satiety, and in the End degenerating into Gall and bitter Remorse; so that indeed the usual Delights, which Men seek are such, that we should not if we could, and we could not if we would constantly entertain them; such *rejoicing overcome* being equally unreasonable and impossible.

WHEREFORE there is Ground more than enough, that we should be put to seek for a true, substantial and consistent Joy; it being withal implied, that we should look for it another Way, than commonly Men do; who therefore are so generally disappointed, because they would have it upon impossible or undue Terms; and least expect it there, where it is only to be had.

It is a scandalous Mistake, vulgarly admitted, concerning Religion, that it is altogether sullen and sour, requiring a dull, lumpish, morose Kind of Life, barring all Delight, all Mirth, all good Humour: Whereas, on the contrary, it alone is the never-failing Source of true, pure, steady Joy; such as is deeply rooted in the Heart, immovably founded in the Reason of Things, permanent like the immortal Spirit wherein it dwelleth, and like the eternal Objects whereon it is fixed; which is not apt to fade or cloy, and is not subject to any Impressions apt to corrupt or impair it: Whereas in our Text, and in many Texts parallel to it, we see, that our Religion doth not only allow us, but even doth oblige us to be joyful as much and often

as can be, not permitting us to be sad for one Minute, banishing the least Fit of Melancholy, charging us in all Times, upon all Occasions to be chearful; supposing, consequently, that it is in some Manner possible to be so, and affording Power to effect what it requires.

SUCH indeed is the transcendent Goodness of our God, that He maketh our Delight to be our Duty, and our Sorrow to be our Sin, adapting his holy Will to our principal Instinct: He would have us resemble Himself, as in all other Perfections, so in a constant State of Happiness; as He hath provided a glorious Heaven for us hereafter, He would have us enjoy a comfortable Paradise here. He accordingly hath ordered the whole Frame of our Religion in a Tendency to produce Joy in those who embrace it; for what is the Gospel, but *good Tidings of great Joy to all People*? How doth GOD represent Himself herein, but as *the GOD of Love, of Hope, of Peace, of all Consolation*; chearfully smiling in Favour on us, graciously inviting us to the most pleasant Enjoyments, bountifully dispensing most comfortable Blessings of Mercy, of Grace, of Salvation to us? For what doth our LORD call us to Him, but *that He may give us Rest, and Refreshment to our Souls; that He may wipe away all Tears from our Eyes; that He may save us from Despair, and settle us in a blessed Hope; that we may enter into our Master's Joy; that our Joy may be full, and such as no Man can take from us?*

WHAT is the great Overture of the Gospel, but the Gift of a most blessed Comforter, to abide with us for ever, chearing our Hearts with his lightsome Presence, and ravishing Consolations? Wherein doth the Kingdom of Heaven consist? *Not in Meat and Drink; but in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy*

Joy in the Holy Ghost. What are the prime Fruits sprouting from that Root of Christian Life, the Divine Spirit? They are, as St. Paul telleth us, *Love, Joy and Peace*: Are there not numberless Declarations, importing a joyful Satisfaction granted to the Observers of God's Commandments; that *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the upright in Heart*? Doth not our LORD pronounce a special Beatitude to the Practiser of every Virtue? And if we scan all the Doctrines, all the Institutions, all the Precepts, all the Promises of Christianity, will not each appear pregnant with Matter of Joy, will not each yield great Reason, and strong Obligation to rejoice evermore?

WHEREFORE a Christian (according to the Design of his Religion, and in Proportion to his Compliance with its Dictates) is the most chearful Person in the World; continually bearing a Mind well satisfied, a light Heart and calm Spirit, a smooth Brow and serene Countenance, a grateful Accent of Speech, and a sweetly composed Tenor of Carriage: No black Thought, no irksome Desire, no troublesome Passion should lodge in his Breast; any Furrow, any Frown, any Cloud doth sit ill upon his Face; the least fretful Word, or froward Behaviour doth utterly misbecome him: If at any Time it appear otherwise, it is a Deflexion from his Character; it is a Blemish and Wrong to his Profession; it argued a Prevarication in his Judgment, or in his Practice; he forgetteth that he is a Christian, or hath not preserved the Innocence belonging to that Name. For, if a Christian remembereth what he is, or is sensible of his Condition; if he reflecteth on the Dignity of his Person, the Nobleness of his Relations, the Sublimity of his Privileges, the Greatness and Certainty of his Hopes, how can he be out of Humour? Is it not absurd

for him that is at Peace with Heaven, with his own Conscience, with all the World; for the Possessor of the best Goods, and the Heir of a blessed Immortality; for the Friend, the Favourite, the Son of GOD, to fret and wail?

HE that is settled in a most prosperous State, that is (if he pleaseth) secure of its Continuance, that is well assured of its Improvement; that hath whatever Good he can wish in his Reach, and more than he can conceive in sure Reversion, what Account can be given that he should be sad?

HE that hath the inexhaustible Spring of Good for his Portion, that hath his Welfare entrusted in GOD's most faithful Hand; that hath GOD's infallible Word for his Support; that hath free Access to Him, *in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy*; that hath frequent Tastes of GOD's Goodness, in gracious Dispensations of Providence, in Intercourses of Devotion, in the Influences of Grace; that hath the infinite Beauty and Excellency for the perpetual Object of his Contemplation and Affection; that enjoyeth the Serenity of a sound Mind, of a pure Heart, of a quiet Conscience, of a sure Hope, what can he want to refresh or comfort him?

IF a true Christian hath no Care to distract him, having discharged all his Concerns on GOD's Providence: If he hath no Fear to dismay him, being guarded by the Almighty Protection from all Danger and Mischief: If he hath no Despair to sink him, having a sure Refuge in the Divine Mercy and Help: If he hath no superstitious Terrors or Scruples to perplex him, being conscious of his own upright Intentions to please GOD, and confident of GOD's accepting him: If he hath no incurable Remorse to torment him, the Stings of Guilt being pulled

pulled out by the Merits of his Saviour, applied by his Faith and Repentance: If he hath no longing Desires to disquiet him, being fully satisfied with that he doth possess, or may expect from God's Bounty; all other Things being far beneath his Ambition, or Coveting: If he hath no Contentions to inflame him, knowing nought is here worth passionately striving for, and being resolved to hold a friendly Good-Will toward all Men: If he hath no repining Envy, seeing that none can be more happy than he may be, and that every Man's Good by Charity is made his own: If he hath no fretful Discontent, since he doth gladly acquiesce in the Condition and Success allotted him, resigning his Will to God's Pleasure, taking all for best which thence doth occur, being assured that *all Things shall work together for his Good* and Advantage: If he hath no spiteful Rancours to corrode his Heart, no boisterous Passions to ruffle his Mind, no inordinate Appetites, perverse Humours, or corrupt Designs to distemper his Soul; whence then may Sorrow come, or how can Sadness creep into him?

WHAT is there belonging to a Christian, whence Grief naturally can spring? From God, *our exceeding Joy*, the Fountain of Happiness; from Heaven, the Region of Light and Bliss; from Divine Truth, which illustrateth and cheareth the Soul; from God's Law, which rejoiceth the Heart; from Wisdom, *whose Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all whose Paths are Peace*; from Virtue, which cureth our afflictive Distempers, and composeth our vexatious Passions; from these Things, I say, about which a Christian, as such, is only conversant, no Sorrow can be derived; from these sweet Sources no bitter Streams can flow: But Hell, the Flesh, the World, Darknes, Error, Folly, Sin and Irreligion, (Things with which a Christian should

should have nothing to do, from which he should keep a-loof, which he doth renounce and abandon) these, these alone, are the Parents of Discomfort and Anguish.

WHEREFORE there is the same Reason, the same Obligation, the same Possibility that we should *rejoice evermore*, as that we should always be Christians, exactly performing Duty, and forbearing Sin; for Innocence and Indolency go together, both together making Paradise; perfect Virtue and constant Alacrity are inseparable Companions, both constituting Beatitude.

INDEED to exercise Piety and to rejoice are the same Things, or Things so interwoven that nothing can disjoin them; religious Practice is like that *River, the Streams whereof make glad the City of GOD, the holy Place of the Tabernacle of the Most High*, that is, every pious Soul: No good Deed can be performed without Satisfaction; each Virtue hath a peculiar Delight annexed to it; whence the Acts of Joy, which upon various Objects, Grounds, and Occasions, we may exert, being numberless, I shall only touch a few Instances.

I. WE should evermore rejoice in the Exercise of our Faith; according to that Prayer of our Apostle for the *Romans*: *Now the GOD of Hope fill you with all Peace and Joy in Believing.*

EVERY Kind of Faith (that which embraceth Divine Truths, that which applieth GOD's Mercy, that which insureth GOD's Promises, that which confideth in GOD's Providence, each of them) is a clear Spring of Joy, ever standing open to us; which he that drinketh, *shall never thirst.*

1. THE Faith which embraceth GOD's heavenly Truth, doth not only enlighten our Minds, but affect our Hearts; there being no Article of Faith, or Mystery of our Religion, which doth not involve some great Advantage, some happy Occurrence dispensed to us by the Goodness of GOD, which Faith doth apprehend and convey to our spiritual Taste. Is it not sweet with Faith to contemplate the rich Bounty of GOD in the Creation of the World, and producing so goodly a Frame, so copious a Store of Things, with a special Regard to our Sustenance and Accommodation? Is it not satisfactory to believe that GOD, by his Almighty Hand and vigilant Care, with the same benign Regard doth uphold and govern the same? Is it not extremely pleasant with Faith to reflect on that great Honour and Happiness, which GOD did vouchsafe to confer on Mankind, by sending down from Heaven his only Son, to assume our Nature, to converse with Men, that we might be advanced to a Participation of the Divine Nature, and to an Enjoyment of Communion with GOD? How without Delight can we believe, that our Saviour, by his meritorious Obedience and Passion, hath appeased GOD's Wrath, and inclined his Favour toward us, hath satisfied Justice, hath expiated our Offences, hath rescued our Souls from the Dominion of Sin and *Satan*, from Death and Corruption, from Hell and everlasting Torment; hath purchased immortal Life, and endless Bliss for us? What Comfort is there in being assured by the Resurrection and Triumph of our LORD over Death, that our Souls are indeed immortal, that our Bodies shall be raised from the Dust, that our Persons are capable of an eternal Subsistence in Happiness? Will it not much please us with an Eye of Faith to behold our Redeemer sitting in glorious Exaltation at GOD's Right Hand, governing the World for

for the Benefit of his Church, dispensing Benediction and Grace to us; interceding as *our merciful and faithful High-Priest* for the Pardon of our Sins, the Acceptance of our Prayers, the Supply of our Needs, and the Relief of our Distresses? If we be fully convinced, that our LORD JESUS is the CHRIST, our LORD and Saviour, *the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey Him*, how can we otherwise than follow those, of whom St. Peter saith, *Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though you now see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory?* So from the hearty Belief of every evangelical Truth we may suck Consolation; each of them is Food of our Soul; and to believe it is to eat it, which how can we do without a most savoury Relish?

2. At least methinks that Faith greatly should exhilarate us, which applieth those Virtues, (*so worthy of all Acceptation*) wherein GOD doth open his Arms wide to embrace us, proposing most kind Invitations, and favourable Overtures of Mercy, upon the fairest Terms possible; together with effectual Remedies for all the Maladies and Miseries of our Souls: For if we are sensible of our heinous Guilts; if we are laden with the heavy Burthen of our Sins; if our Heart is galled with sore Compunction for our Misdeeds; if we are struck with the *Terrors of the LORD, and tremble with the Fear of GOD's Judgments*; how comfortable must it be to be persuaded that GOD is fully reconcileable to us, is very desirous to shew us Mercy, and gladly will accept our Repentance; that *we have an Advocate with the Father, who hath propitiated for our Sins*, doth mediate for our Peace, hath both full Power and certain Will, if we sincerely believe, wholly to remit them? So that *there is therefore now no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,*

Jesus, who walk not after the Flesh, but after the Spirit; and that being justified by Faith we have Peace with GOD, through our LORD Jesus Christ: Will not this Belief revive us, and make the broken Bones to rejoice; will not the Gospel of Peace be hence in Truth a joyful Sound to us? Might it not hence well be proclaimed in the Prophet *Isaiah*, *Comfort ye, Comfort ye my People: Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her Warfare is accomplished, that her Iniquity is pardoned.*

AND if we find ourselves in Soul grievously distempered, labouring under great Impotency and Blindness, overborne and oppressed with the Prevalency of Corruption, pestered with unreasonable Desires and Passions, unable to curb our Inclinations and Appetites, to resist Temptations, to discharge our Duty in any tolerable Measure; is it not then comfortable to believe, that we have a most faithful and skilful Physician at Hand to cure our Distempers; that we have a powerful Succour to relieve our Infirmities; that GOD is ready to impart an abundant Supply of Grace, of Light, of Spiritual Strength to direct and assist us; that if any Man lack Wisdom, he is encouraged with Faith to ask it of GOD, who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not? If any Man want Strength, GOD's Almighty Spirit is promised to those, who with humble Earnestness implore it; so that we may be able to do all Things (incumbent on us) by Christ who strengthneth us.

3. AND what more hearty Satisfaction can we feel, than in a firm Persuasion concerning the real Accomplishment of those exceeding great and precious Promises, whereby we become capable of the most excellent Privileges, the most ample Benefits, the most happy Rewards? How can the Belief that

that as sure as Truth itself, an eternal Inheritance, a Treasure that cannot fail, a Glory that cannot fade, a Kingdom that cannot be shaken, a Felicity surpassing all Expression, is reserved for us, in Recompence of our faithful Obedience; how, I say, can that be a dead, dull, dry Belief, void of sprightly Comfort and Pleasure?

LIKEWISE the Faith of Confidence in God's good Providence, and paternal Care over us (whatever our Condition or Circumstances be) will infuse a chearful Refreshment of Heart into us.

IT is in Scripture frequently asserted, that he who placeth his Trust in God, is a very blessed and happy Person; and can we without great Satisfaction partake of that Beatitude?

CAN we by such a Trust disburden all our solicitous Cares, all our anxious Fears, all the Troubles of our Spirit, and Pressures of our Condition upon God, with strong Assurance, that from his mighty Power and watchful Care, in due Time, in the most expedient Manner, we shall receive a competent Supply of our Wants, a Rid-dance from our Grievances, a Protection from all Danger, a Blessing upon all our good Endeavours, without feeling much Ease and Peace in our Hearts?

WHAT can be more chearing than a Persua-sion, that all our Concerns are lodged in the Hands of such a Friend, so wise, so able, so faithful, so affectionate, so readily disposed to help us, and further our Good? They who trust in God, are said to abide under the Shadow of the Almighty, and to be covered with his Wings; God is often

filled

stiled their Rock, their Fortress, their Shield and Buckler, their Defence and Refuge; and are they not then impregnablely safe? Why then should they fear? At what Occurrence should they be disturbed? Have they not huge Reason to say with the Psalmist, *In the Shadow of thy Wings will I rejoice; The LORD is my Strength and my Shield, my Heart trusteth in Him, and I am helped; therefore my Heart danceth for Joy, and in my Song will I praise Him.*

II. WE should evermore rejoice in the Practice of Christian Hope, making good that Aphorism of Solomon, *The Hope of the Righteous shall be Gladness*; and obeying those Apostolical Injunctions, that we should *rejoice in Hope*; that we should *retain the Confidence, and the rejoicing of Hope firm to the End*. Those excellent and most beneficial Truths, those sweet Proposals of Grace and Mercy, those rich Promises, which Faith doth apprehend as true in general to all Christians, Hope doth apply particularly to ourselves, improving the Knowledge of our common Capacity into a Sense of our special Interest in them. GOD, saith our Faith, will assuredly receive all penitent Sinners to Mercy, will crown all pious Christians with Glory, will faithfully perform whatever He hath graciously promised to all People, hath a tender Care for all that love and fear Him: But GOD, saith our Hope, will have Mercy on me, will *render to me the Wages of Righteousness*, will *verify his good Word to me his Servant*, will protect, will deliver, will bless me in all Exigences: If so, being conscious of our sincere Endeavour to serve and please GOD; if discerning from a careful Reflexion upon our Heart and Ways, that in some good Measure we have discharged the Conditions requi-

red of us, we can assume a Propriety in his Regard, how can we forbear conceiving Joy?

ALL Hope, in Proportion to the Worth of its Object, and the Solidity of its Ground, is comfortable; it being *the Anchor of the Soul*, which stayeth and supporteth it in undisturbed Rest; it appeaseth unquiet Desires, setting absent Goods before us, and anticipating future Enjoyments by a sweet Foretaste: Seeing then if we have a good Conscience, and *our Heart doth not condemn us*, our Hope is grounded *on the Rock of Ages* (on the immutable Nature, and the infallible Word of GOD) seeing it is the Hope of the most worthy, the most sublime, the most incomparable and inestimable Goods, it must be extremely delightful.

IF it much pleaseth Men to know themselves Heirs to a fair Estate, to have the Reversion of a good Office, or a great Preferment (altho' Death may intercept, or other Accidents may obstruct the Accomplishment of such Hopes) how much more shall that *lively Hope of an Inheritance, incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us; who are kept by the Power of GOD through Faith unto Salvation*, breed a most chearful Satisfaction, far transcending all other Pleasures, which spring from the most desirable Fruitions here; according to that Admonition of our LORD, *Notwithstanding in this rejoice not that the Spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice that your Names are written in Heaven.*

III. We should evermore rejoice in Charity; both that to GOD, and that to our Neighbour.

LOVE is the sweetest of all Passions; and when, by the Conduct of Wisdom, it is directed in a rational

tional Way toward a worthy attainable Object, it cannot otherwise than fill the Heart with ravishing Delight.

AND such (in all Respects superlatively such) an Object is GOD: He infinitely beyond all Things deserveth our Affection, as most perfectly amiable and desirable, as having obliged us by innumerable and inestimable Benefits, all the Good that we have ever enjoyed, or that we can ever expect, being derived from his pure Bounty; all Things in the World in Competition with Him, being pitifully mean and loathsome; all Things without Him being vain, unprofitable, and hurtful to us; so that the Psalmist might well say, *Who in Heaven can be compared unto the LORD? Who among the Sons of the Mighty can be likened unto the LORD? Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I can desire beside Thee.* He alone can satisfy the vast Capacity of our Minds, and fill our boundless Desires.

He of all lovely Things most certainly and easily may be attained; for whereas commonly Men are crossed in their Affection, and their Love is embittered from their loving Things imaginary, which they cannot reach, or Things which disdain and reject their Affection; it is concerning God quite otherwise; for,

He is most ready to impart Himself, and will not reject any that cometh unto Him; He most earnestly desireth and woeth our Love; He is not only most willing to correspond in Affection, but doth prevent us therein, for *we love Him* (saith the Apostle) *because He first loved us.*

He doth cherish and encourage our Love by sweet Influences, and most comfortable Embraces, by kindest Expressions of Favour, by most beneficial Returns, ordering *that all Things shall work together for good to those who love Him*: And whereas all other Objects in the Enjoyment fail our Expectation, He doth ever far exceed it.

WHEREFORE in all affectionate Motions of our Hearts toward GOD, in desiring Him, or seeking his Favour; in embracing Him, or setting our Confidence on Him; in enjoying Him by Meditation and Prayer; in a reflexive Sense of our Interest and Propriety in Him; in that mysterious Union of Spirit, hereby we are (as it were) inserted in Him; in a hearty Complacence in his Benignity, a grateful Resentment of his Kindness, and a zealous Desire of yielding some Requit for it, we cannot but feel very pleasant Transports, assuring to us the Truth of that Saying in the *Psalm*, *They that love thy Name shall be joyful in Thee*; and disposing us to cry out with the *Psalmist*, *How excellent is thy Loving-Kindness, O LORD; Because thy Loving-Kindness is better than Life, my Lips shall praise Thee.*

INDEED that celestial Flame (kindled in our Hearts by the Spirit of Love) cannot be void of Warmth; we cannot fix our Eyes upon infinite Beauty, we cannot taste infinite Sweetness, without perpetually rejoicing in the first Daughter of Love to GOD, Charity toward Men; which in Complexion and chearful Disposition, doth most resemble its Mother: For it doth rid all those gloomy turbulent Imaginations and Passions, which cloud our Mind, which fret our Heart, which discompose the Frame of our Soul; (from burning Anger, from storming Contention, from gnawing Envy,

Envy, from rankling Spite, from racking Suspicion, from distracting Ambition and Avarice). It consequently settles our Mind in an even Temper, in a sedate Humour, in an harmonious Order, in that pleasant State of Tranquility, which naturally results from the Conquests of irregular Passions.

AND who can enumerate or express the Pleasures which wait on every Kind, on each Act of Charity?

How triumphant a Joy is there in doing Good? Whereby we gratify our best Inclinations, whereby we oblige our Brethren and endear ourselves to them, whereby we most resemble the Divine Goodness?

ST. Paul telleth us, that GOD loveth a chearful Giver; and he prescribeth, that *he who sheweth Mercy, should do it with Chearfulness*: And in the Law it is commanded, *Thine Heart shall not grieve, when thou givest to thy poor Brother*: And who indeed can out of Love give Alms, or shew Mercy, without Chearfulness? Seeing he thereby doth ease his own Bowels; considering that in doing Good to his Neighbour, he receiveth far more Good to himself; that he then doth put forth his Stock to great and certain Advantage; that he dischargeth an Office acceptable to GOD, doth render Him a Debtor, doth engage Him abundantly to requite that Beneficence.

WHAT Satisfaction is there in forgiving Offences; whereby we discharge our Souls from vexatious Inmates (black Thoughts, and rancorous Animosities;) whereby we clear ourselves from the Troubles attending Feuds and Strifes;

whereby we imitate our most gracious Creator, and transcribe the Pattern of our meek Redeemer; whereby we continue ourselves capable of Divine Mercy; according to that Divine Word, *If you forgive Men their Trespases, your heavenly Father will forgive you.*

How unconfinedly and inexhaustibly vast is that Delight, which a charitable Complacence in the Good of our Neighbour (*a rejoicing with those that rejoice*) may afford? A Man thence engrossing all the Good in the World, and appropriating to himself all the Successes, all the Entertainments, all the Satisfactions of his Neighbour, even a charitable Sympathy in the Adversities of our Neighbour, is not destitute of Content; for the Soul is thereby melted into a gentle Temper, susceptible of the best Impressions; we share in the Comfort, which we minister to others; we are refreshed in that kindly Submission to the good Pleasure of God, in that lightsome Contemplation of God's Mercy, in those comfortable Hopes of a happy Issue, which we suggest to the Afflicted: We are disposed to a grateful Sense of God's Goodness, in preserving ourselves from those Calamities, and in qualifying us to comfort our Brethren; we feel Satisfaction in reflecting upon this very Practice, and observing that we act conformably to the Will of God, therein discharging a good Conscience, and enjoying a Portion of that *continual Feast*.

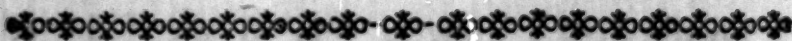
I SHOULD, if the Time would permit, farther declare how we should find Delight in the Contemplation of all God's Attributes, of his Works, of his Word; in thankful Resentment of all God's Benefits; in willing Obedience to all God's Laws; how Joy is a proper Fruit growing on the Practice

Practice of Humility, of Justice, of Temperance, of Devotion, of every Virtue : More particularly I should have evidenced how from a patient Submission to GOD's afflicting Hand, from penitential Contrition of Heart, from a pious Fear and Sollicitude in working out our Salvation, most sweet Consolations spring : But in recommending Joy I would not produce Grief ; and therefore shall not farther annoy your Patience.





S E R M O N VII.



PROV. iv. 23.

Keep thy Heart with all Diligence.

THE Words, *with all Diligence*; admit a threefold Acceptation. They may (1.) denote absolutely the Intenseness in Degree or Extention in Kind of the Performance required: Keep thy Heart with all Custody, that is, with all Sorts, or with all Degrees of Care and Diligence. They may (2.) signify comparatively keep thy Heart above all Keeping; that is, more than thou keepest any any other Thing; *because from it are the Issues of Life*; that is, because it is the principal Part and Fountain of all vital Operations and therefore deserveth the best Custody; They may be also (3.) Taken so as to denote the Universality of the Object or Matter of this Keeping, or the adequate Term and Bound thereof; keep thy Heart, from every Thing which

which it should be kept from ; from every Thing offensive or hurtful to it : But I mean only to insist upon the Substance of the Precept ; the Nature of which being duly considered, will infer that it is to be observed according to the Manner and Measure prescribed, understood according to any of those Senses, or according to all of them conjointly.

As for the Meaning of the Words, *Keep thy Heart* ; two Enquiries may be made : 1. What the Heart is ? 2. What to keep it doth import.

To the *First* I answer, that in the Stile of Scripture the Heart doth commonly import the whole inward Man, the *ὅλον ἀνδρα*, the Man within us, (as St. Paul speaketh) the hidden Man of the Heart (as St. Peter calleth it) comprehending all the Thoughts and Imaginations, all the Inclinations and Dispositions ; all the Judgments and Opinions, all the Passions and Affections ; all the Resolutions and Purposes formed within us ; in short, all interior, whether Tendencies to move, or actual Motions of the human Soul. Because the Heart in a Man's Breast is most inwardly seated, most secluded from Sight, guarded from Access, fenced from Danger, thence whatever is inmost most invifible, most inaccessible in any Thing is called the Heart thereof ; and all a Man's secret Thoughts, Inclinations Opinions, Affections, Designs are involved in this Name : Sometimes all, or divers of them conjunctly are called his Heart, sometimes any one of them singly : Instances in every Kind are innumerable many, and therefore I shall not spend Time in producing any, but shall suppose that here the Word may be understood in its utmost Extent ; so as to comprehend all the Particulars

culars intimated; there being no apparent Reason for preferring or excluding any; all of them being capable of a moral Quality, both immediately in themselves, and consequentially as they may be the Principles of good or bad Actions; and because all of them may be, need to be, ought to be the Objects of the Keeping here enjoined.

BUT then what is this Keeping? I answer, the Word applied to this is especially capable of three Senses.

1. IT may imply to keep it under a constant View, to mark to inquire into and study our Heart. So, *My Son* (saith the Wise-man) *give me thine Heart, and let thine Eyes keep* (or observe) *my Ways*; the same Word which here, is used both in *Hebrew* and *Greek*, and can there signify no other Custody, but that of attending to; it being the Office of the Eye only to look, and observe. Likewise, *Observe* (saith GOD in the Law) *and hear all these Words which I command thee*; that is, hear them attentively: And so in divers other Places.

2. IT may also denote the good Management of our Hearts; keeping all the Motions thereof in good Order; applying them to good, and restraining them from bad Things: So the *Psalmist* useth the Word, when he saith, *I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle*; that is, I will so rule and curb it, that no evil Language shall issue from it: So when the Wise-man adviseth to *keep our Foot when we go to the House of GOD*; by keeping it, he means rightly to guide and order our Proceedings; or well to dispose ourselves when we address ourselves to religious Performances: So again, *He* (saith he) *that keepeth the Fig-tree, shall eat of the Fruit thereof*; that

that is, he that dresseth and ordereth it to Advantage for bearing Fruit.

3. AGAIN, keeping may be taken for preserving, guarding, securing from Mischief, which indeed is the most common Use of the Word.

Now any of these Senses may be intended here, or all of them together; and they indeed are in the Nature of the Thing so dependent one on the other, that any one of them can hardly be practised without the rest: for without heedfully observing our Heart we cannot well govern it; and an ill governed Heart cannot easily be attended to; and without both watchfull Observation, and skilfull Management of it we cannot guard it from Evil; and reciprocally without guarding it, we cannot well rule it, or duly mind it: Such a Complication there is in these three Custodies.

I SHALL discourse concerning the first of them only, which seems in the Nature of Things, to precede. According to this Exposition, when it is said, *Keep thy Heart with all Diligence*, we may understand it, as if each of us were thus advised: With a most constant and wary Care observe all the interiour Propensions and Motions of thy Soul; whatever is done, or designed within thee; whither thy Desires lean, what thy Affections are stirred by, to what thy Judgment of Things doth lead thee, with great Attention mark and ponder it.

It is a peculiar Excellency of human Nature, which seemeth more to distinguish a Man from any inferiour Rank of Creatures, than bare Reason itself, that he can reflect upon all that is done within him, can discern the Tendencies of his Soul, is acquainted with his own Purposes. Were he not
conscious

conscious of his own Opinions, how could he weigh, and examine them; how could he conform his Actions to them, or practise according to the Dictates of his Conscience? It is therefore plainly needful that Man should be endowed with this Power, for without it he can neither perform the Duty required of him, nor enjoy the Benefits he is designed for: Our Maker therefore hath conferred it upon us, our Duty consists in its right Use, our Advantage ariseth from the constant and careful Exercise of this Faculty: Constant and careful, I say: Constant, for Observation implies so much; for, if ever we shut our Eyes, or turn our Heads aside, what we look to may be gone; much will pass unobserved by us; especially such quick and fleeting Things as are the interior Motions of our Soul; wherefore a continual Vigilancy is requisite to a Keeper of the Heart: It must also be careful, as the Keeper of a Thing so nimble and slippery must not sleep, so he must not slumber; he must be very intent upon his Charge; superficial Glances upon the outward Face, as it were, of the Soul will not suffice; to observe is with earnest Care to look thro' the Matter; to discern whatever lurketh therein, to pierce into the very Depth and Bottom of it, to spy through every Corner therein; otherwise it is but slightly viewed rather than truly observed: Especially so subtil, so intricate, so obscure a Thing as a Man's Heart is requireth an extraordinary Application in observing it with Fruit.

THIS is then our Duty, to be continually with extreme Diligence looking inward upon ourselves, observing what Thoughts spring up within us, what Imaginations find most welcome Harbour in our Breasts, what Objects most affect us with Delight, or Displeasure (what it is that we love and readily embrace; what we distaste and reject) what Prejudices

Prejudices possess our Minds; wherefore we propose to ourselves such Undertakings; conversing with ourselves, and as it were discoursing in this Manner: What is it that I think upon, are my Thoughts serious, seasonable, and pure? Are my Inclinations compliant to GOD's Law? What Judgments do I make of Things; are my Apprehensions clear, solid and sure? What doth most easily stir me, and how is my Heart moved; are my Affections calm, orderly, and well placed? What Projects am I driving on; are my Designs good, are my Intentions upright and sincere? Let me thoroughly inquire into these Points, let me be fully satisfied in them; thus should we continually be doing. The Holy Scripture doth often bid us, judge ourselves, examine our Works; to search and try; to weigh, to heed, to watch over our Ways: *If (saith St. Paul) we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged;* we should avoid those Miscarriages, which bring the Divine Judgments upon us: *Let us (saith the Prophet) search and try our Ways, and turn unto the LORD;* and, *I said I will take Heed to my Ways (saith the Psalmist;)* and, *ponder the Path of thy Feet, and let all thy Ways be established,* is the Wise Man's Advice: Search our Ways, and ponder our Paths, this implies, that we first examine, and weigh our Hearts; for there our Ways begin, thence is Motion derived to our Feet; and to our Hands also: All our Actions depend as Effects of them, all receive their moral Quality thence: Whatever in our Doings is good or bad, doth (as our LORD expresseth it) issue from within us; our Actions are but Streams sweet and bitter, clear or foul according to the Tincture they receive at those inward Sources of good or evil Inclinations, of true or false Judgments, of pure or corrupt Intentions; there consequently we are principally obliged to exercise the Scrutiny required of us.

SUCH is the Duty; and the Practice thereof is of huge Profit; bringing many great Advantages with it; the Neglect of it is attended with many grievous Mischiefs; and for perswading to the one, dissuading from the other I shall propound some of them.

THE most immediate Advantage rising hence is this, that by such a constant and careful Inspection, of our Hearts, we may arrive to a competent Knowledge of, and a true Acquaintance with ourselves (a most useful Knowledge, a most beneficial Acquaintance) neither of which is otherwise attainable. *The Heart* (as you know the Prophet says) *is deceitful above all Things; and, who* (adds he) *can know it*. Who can know it: None it Seems, but GOD that made it; and the Man, that hath it: He that hath it, must, I say, be able competently to know it; even in Regard to him the Question may intimate some Difficulty, but it doth not denote an Impossibility: Hard it may be for us to know the Heart by Reason of its Deceitfulness; but the slickest Imposture, if narrowly looked into, may be detected: It is a very subtile and abstruse, a very various and mutable Thing; the Multiplicity of Objects it converses with, the divers Alterations it is subject to from bodily Temper, Custom, Company, Example, other unaccountable Causes; especially its Proneness to comply with, and to suit its Judgments of Things to present Circumstances without, and present Appetites within, render it such; wherefore it is not easy to know it; but yet possible it is; for under severe Penalties we are obliged not to be deceived by it, *Let no Man* (saith St. Paul) *deceive himself; see that ye be not deceived*, saith our Saviour; *Take Heed* (saith Moses) *to yourselves, that your Heart be not deceived*; such Precepts

Precepts there are many, obliging us to know our Hearts, and to discover the Fallacies put on them, or upon us by them; carrying with them Directions how to compass it; that is, by looking about us, and taking Heed: It is therefore a feasible Thing to avoid being imposed upon, and well to understand ourselves: But as other abstruse Pieces of Knowledge, so this especially cannot be attained without industrious Application and constant Observations to find the Corners wherein the Deceit lurks; we must pursue its secret Windings, we must trace it Step by Step (as Hunters do wild Beasts) into the utmost Recesses of its first Desires, and most deeply rooted Prejudices; we must do as *David* did, when he strove to free himself from Distrust and Impatience; *I communed with my own Heart*, (saith he) *and my Spirit made diligent Search*; by which Practice he found, as he farther acquaints us, that it was *his Infirmity*, which moved him to doubt of *God's Mercy and Benignity* toward him.

ALL Men are inquisitive after Knowledge, the being endued therewith passeth for a goodly Ornament. Men are commonly ashamed of nothing so much as Ignorance; but if any Knowledge meriteth Esteem, this, next to that concerning Almighty God, may best pretend thereto; if any Ignorance deserveth Blame, this certainly is most liable thereto.

I PROCEED to the particular Advantages of the Practice of this Duty, and the Inconveniences of the Neglect of it.

I. THE constant and careful Observation of our Hearts will serve to prevent immoderate Self-love, and Self-conceit; to prender us sober and modest

modest in our Opinions concerning, and in our Affections toward ourselves; qualifying us to comply with the Apostolical Precept, not to overween, or over value ourselves, and our own Things: For he that by serious Inspection upon his own Heart, shall discern how many fond, impure, and ugly Thoughts swarm within him, how averse his Inclinations are from Good, and how prone to Evil; how much his Affections are misplaced, and distempered; how Clouds of Darkness, Error and Doubt hover upon the Face of his Soul; so that he quickly taketh up Opinions, and soon layeth them down, and often turneth from one Mistake to another; how unsettled his Resolutions are, especially in the Pursuance of the best Goods; and what corrupt Mixtures cleave to his best Purposes; who taketh Notice how backward and how cold in Devotions toward God, how little sensible of his Goodness, or fearful of his Displeasure, or zealous for his Honour, or careful of performing his Duty toward Him; how little he desireth, or delighteth in the Good, that he pitieth, and grieveth at the Evil of his Neighbour; how sluggish also and remiss he is in the Pursuance of his own best Affairs, and highest Concernments; he that doth, I say, frequently with Heedfulness regard these Things in his own Heart, how can he be ravished with Self-love? How can he be taken with himself? Can any Man dote upon such Deformity, admire such Weakness and Naughtiness? No surely; that Men are so amorous of themselves, so haughty and arrogant in their Conceits, arises from not reflecting on their own Hearts; not beholding themselves in that Mirrour; not considering how little lovely, or worthy they are; if they did practice that, they would see Reason, to despise, to loath, to pity themselves.

2. UPON that Advantage is consequent, that this Practice will dispose us with Patience to bear all Crosses and Grievances ; so producing not only an excellent Virtue, but a considerable Solace to us ; for the being conscious of so much Unworthiness, which Observation of our Heart will necessarily discover, will not only justify the Providence, but commend the Benignity of GOD unto us. It will prompt us heartily to confess, that *our Punishments are less than our Deservings* ; to acknowledge that GOD *bath not dealt with us after our Sins ; nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities* ; to say with *Jeremiah, It is of the LORD's Mercy, that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not.*

3. PARTICULARLY this Practice will fence us against immoderate Displeasure at Mens hard Opinions, or harsh Censures of us : For he that by Inquiry into himself perceives so many Defects, will not so easily, nor so greatly be offended, if some of them (or some like them) be objected to him ; since he finds in himself many more, and greater.

4. LIKEWISE this Practice will defend us, as from the Discomforts of harsh Censure, so from the Mistakes and Miscarriages, to which the favourable Opinions of Men, may expose us.

THE common Nature of Men disposeth them to be credulous, when they are commended, or esteem'd by others : Every Ear is tickled with this sweetest Musick of Applause : But we are not to rely upon others ill-grounded Judgment, so much as upon our own more certain Knowledge concerning ourselves :

TAKE no Man's Word before thine own Sense, in what concerns thine own Character. For that a Man in Questions of this Kind is able to be a skilful Umpire between himself and others; that he is neither elevated, nor depressed by external Weights, but keepeth himself equally poised by his own well-informed Conscience; that neither his Heart is exasperated with the bitterest Gall of Reproach, nor his Head intoxicated with the sweetest Wine of Flattery, is an invaluable Convenience of Life; or rather it is a Virtue arguing a most strong and healthful Constitution of Soul.

5. LIKEWISE, this will conduce to qualify our Opinions, and moderate our Passions toward others; so that without Anger, or Bitterness we may bear the Faults, Errors, and Infirmities of our Brethren; that we shall be benign in our Carriage, and gentle in our Censures even toward them, who do not behave themselves so wisely as they should. St. Paul thus admonisheth the *Galatians*: *Brethren, if a Man be overtaken in a Fault, ye which are spiritual* (the more spiritual whether in Truth, or in our own Esteem, the more especially are we obliged hereto) *restore such an one in the Spirit of Meekness, considering thyself, lest thou may be also tempted*: Looking upon, or spying into thyself, such considering ourselves taking Notice of our Infirmary within, perceiving how subject we are to the Impressions of Temptation, and that hence it may be our own Case to fall, if Occasion concur with our Weakness; discerning this, I say, as it will be a Reason obliging, so it may be an Instrument conducing to a Mitigation of Spirit toward those, whom we see overtaken with Mistake or Frailty.

6. THE Observation of our Heart is very conducive to render Men truly wise and prudent; in those Things especially, which most nearly concern them; giving them to see before them, and to understand what they do; as contrarily the Neglect thereof rendereth Men unadvised and uncertain in their Doings. A main Point of Prudence consisteth in suiting a Man's Undertakings to his Powers and Capacities; in not attempting Things surpassing his Ability, or Fitness; and in not declining such Attempts, as he may well compass. Some are over bold in setting upon Things beyond their Strength to accomplish, or Skill to Manage; whence commonly with Shame and Sorrow they are defeated in their Enterprises: Others are over backward so as not to adventure upon what they may with good Advantage, perhaps ought to perform; both which Inconveniences usually proceed from the not looking into, and studying the Heart; for the greatest Impediments of Action lie there; being grounded upon inward Indispositions, or Disagreeableness of Mens Temper, Capacity, Inclination to the Matters, to which they apply themselves: A tender Foot will be galled if you set it in rugged Paths; a weak Head will turn, if you place it high; a soft Spirit cannot well comport with boisterous Employment; he that naturally affects Calm and Quiet, must not hope to come off well, if he engage himself in Affairs exposed to a bundance of Care and Tumult; nor will he if he be well studied this Way, and rightly understand himself, adventure thereupon.

7. NEAR to that lies another considerable Benefit attending this Practice, which is, that it will help to render us ready in our Resolutions, and constant to them; consistent with ourselves, and
uniform

uniform in our Proceedings; whence will arise both great Convenience to ourselves, and Satisfaction to others with whom we converse: As on the contrary Side, from the Neglect thereof we shall become slow in Deliberation, doubtful in Resolution, and unstable in Performance. When any Occasion of Acting is presented, we shall be ready to close with what is best for us, if by due Study and Experience we are acquainted with ourselves; that Acquaintance is a certain Preparation to a speedy Choice, and we shall upon the same Grounds constantly adhere to our Choice, standing upon so firm a Base, and so shall neither discompose ourselves, nor disappoint others by our Irresolution and Inconstancy.

8. A SERIOUS Inspection into our Hearts doth much avail toward the Reformation of our Hearts and Lives; curing the Distempers, and correcting the Vices of them. For to the curing any Disease it is requisite to know the Complexion and Temper of the Patient, and the Part affected, and the next Causes thereof: As the most grievous of bodily Diseases are seated in, or proceed from the Intraills; but not all of them from the same Intraill; and the same Disease depends upon the Distemper of one, sometimes of another among them: So do all Vices (as our Saviour expressly teacheth) issue from the Heart, or interior Man; some from one, some from another Part or Region thereof; and the same from different Parts: Sometimes natural Temper, sometimes false Opinion, sometimes evil Custom is the Root of the same Kind of Disease; and it is expedient we should know distinctly which of them in particular Cases is the Root, that accordingly we may understand what Method of Cure to use, whence to fetch the Remedy, where to apply it;

it; for Unskilfulness in these Points may frustrate our Endeavours of Amendment.

9. THIS Practice farther, doth particularly serve to regulate our Devotions and Performances more immediately spiritual; by shewing us what we need to pray for, what we are obliged to give Thanks for, what it becomes us to confess and deprecate, for Want thereof we shall be apt not only to neglect, but to confound, yea miserably pervert these Duties; to confound them, by praying for what is already given us, for which therefore we are to render Thanks; also by giving Thanks formally for that which perhaps we are far from possessing, and do most want; so, I say, we shall be apt to confound our spiritual Addresses, as wanting due Ground and Object; yea to pervert them, by asking for Things really prejudicial to us, (in the Circumstances we stand) and thanking God for what in Anger He dispenseth to us, (so indeed are many appearing Goods) as also deprecating Things most beneficial and healthful to our Souls; neglecting to return Thanks for what God disposeth in Mercy: Thus from Ignorance of ourselves, and what we truly need, are we apt to pervert our Devotions; not only defeating ourselves of the Advantages they might yield us, but (if God be not more gracious than to hearken to us, and grant our Wishes) bringing lamentable Mischief on ourselves. The two Sons of *Zebedee* conceiting our LORD would shortly become a great Prince, did confidently sue for the next Place of Dignity about Him; our LORD repressed their fond Ambition by downright telling them first, that *they knew not what they asked*; then by demanding of them whether they were able to undergo the Trials they should meet with; implying what they should have requested, that they more needed Humility and Patience, than Pomp
and

and Pleasure: And it was the same two Persons; whose intemperate Zeal He elsewhere checked with, *Ye know not of what Spirit ye are*: And no Wonder, if they who knew not what they were, did ask they knew not what; that being ignorant of their own Hearts, they should make absurd Petitions; that in such a Case they should desire Things not only inconvenient, but dangerous and destructive to themselves.

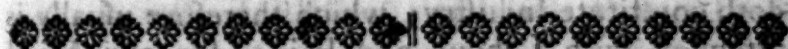
10. I ADD lastly, that universally this Practice is necessary for the well-governing of our Heart. Politicians inculcate much, that to the well-governing of a People, the Nature and Humour of that People should be well understood, for that the grave *Romans* and light *Greeks*, the soft *Persians* and stout *Germans*, the subtil *Africans* and gross *Scythians* could not be well managed in the same Manner. So to govern any Man's Heart (since the Hearts of Men, as their Faces, and as their Voices, differ according to Diversities of Complexion, of Age, of Education, of Custom and Manner of Living) 'tis conduceth to know how it is disposed from any of those, or the like Causes. I conclude with the good Psalmist's Requests: *Teach us thy Way, O LORD, unite our Hearts to fear thy Name. Give us Understanding, and we shall keep thy Law; yea we shall observe it with our whole Heart. Search us, O GOD, and know our Hearts; try us, and know our Thoughts; see if there be any wicked Way in us, and lead us in the Way everlasting. Amen.*





SERMON VIII.

Of INDUSTRY in general.



ECCLES. ix. 10.

*Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with
all thy Might.*

INDUSTRY in general, touching all Matters which
our Hand findeth to do, that is, which Providence doth offer, or Reason embraceth, for employing our Powers of Soul and Body, the wise Man doth here recommend; and to the pressing the Observance of his Advice, I shall presently apply my Discourse, proposing divers Considerations apt to excite us thereto; only first let me briefly describe it, for our better Apprehension of its true Nature.

By Industry we understand a serious and steady Application of Mind, joined with a vigorous Exercise

ercise of our Faculties, in Prosecution of any reasonable, honest, useful Design, in order to the Accomplishment or Attainment of some considerable Good.

INDUSTRY doth not consist merely in Action; for that is incessant in all Persons, our Mind being a restless Thing, never abiding in a total Cessation from Thought or from Design, (being, like a Ship in the Sea, if not steered to some good Purpose by Reason, yet tossed by the Waves of Fancy, or driven by the Winds of Temptation:) But the Direction of our Mind to some good End, without roving, in a straight and steady Course, drawing after it our active Powers in Execution thereof, doth constitute Industry; which therefore usually is attended with Labour and Pain; for our Mind (which naturally doth affect Variety and Liberty, being apt to loath familiar Objects, and to be weary of any Constraint) is not easily kept in a constant Attention to the same Thing; and the Spirits employed in Thought are prone to flutter and fly away, so that it is hard to fix them; and the corporeal Instruments of Action, being strained to a high Pitch, or detained in one Tone, will soon feel a Lassitude: Whence Labour or Pain is commonly reckoned an Ingredient of Industry; and Laboriousness is a Name signifying it; upon which Account this Virtue (as involving Labour) deserveth a peculiar Commendation, it being then most laudable to follow the Dictates of Reason, when so doing is attended with Difficulty.

SUCH in general I conceive to be the Nature of Industry; to the Practice whereof the following Considerations may induce.

I. IN-

I. INDUSTRY doth preserve and perfect our Nature, keeping it in good Tune and Temper, improving and advancing it toward its best State. The Labour of our Mind in attentive Meditation and Study, doth render it capable and patient of thinking upon any Object, or Occasion; doth polish and refine it by Use; doth enlarge it by Accession of Habits; doth quicken and rouse our Spirits, dilating and diffusing them into their proper Channels. The very Labour of our Body doth keep the Organs of Action sound and clean, discharging superfluous Humours, opening Passages, distributing Nourishment, exciting vital Heat: Barring the Use of it, no good Constitution of Soul or Body can subsist; but a foul Rust, a dull Numbness, a resty Listlessness, a heavy Unweildiness must seize on us; our Spirits will be stifled, our Hearts will grow faint and languid, our Parts will flag and decay; the Vigour of our Mind, and the Health of our Body will be much impaired.

It is with us as with other Things in Nature, which by Motion are preserved in their native Purity and Perfection, in their Sweetness, in their Lustre; Rest corrupting, debasing, and defiling them: If the Water runneth, it holdeth clear, sweet and fresh; but Stagnation turneth it into a noisome Puddle: If the Air is fanned by Winds, it is pure and wholesome; but from being shut up, it groweth thick and putrid: If Metals be employed, they abide smooth and splendid; but lay them up, and they soon contract Rust: If the Earth is laboured with Culture, it beareth Corn; but lying neglected, it will be over-grown with Brakes and Thistles; and the better the Soil is, the ranker Weeds it will produce: All Nature is upheld in its Being, Order and State by constant Agitation; every Creature is incessantly employed in Action, conformable to its

End and Use; In like Manner, the Preservation and Improvement of our Faculties depends on their constant Exercise.

2. As we naturally were composed, so by Divine Appointment we were originally designed for Industry: GOD did not intend that Man should live idly even in his best State, or should enjoy Happiness without taking Pains; but did provide Work enough in Paradise itself; for, *The LORD GOD (saith the Text) took Man, and put him into the Garden of Eden, to dress it, and to keep it;* so that had we continued happy, we must have been ever busy, by our Industry sustaining our Life, and securing our Pleasure; otherwise Weeds might have over-grown Paradise, and that of Solomon might have been applicable to Adam, *I went by the Field of the Slothful, and by the Vineyard of the Man void of Understanding, and lo it was all grown over with Thorns, and Nettles had covered the Face thereof.*

3. By our Transgression and Fall, the Necessity of Industry (together with a Difficulty of obtaining Good, and avoiding Evil) was increased to us; being ordained both as a just Punishment for our Offence, and as a Remedy of our Needs: For thereupon *the Ground was cursed, to bring forth Thorns and Thistles to us;* and it was our Doom, pronounced by GOD's own Mouth, *In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread, 'till thou return unto the Ground;* so that now Labour is fatally natural to us: Now Man (as Job saith) *is born to Labour as the Sparks fly upward, (or as the Vulture's Chickens soar aloft, according to the Greek Interpreters).*

4. ACCORDINGLY our Condition and Circumstances in the World are so ordered, as to require Industry;

Industry; so that without it we cannot support our Life in any Comfort or Convenience; wherefore St. Paul's Charge upon the *Thessalonians*, that *If any Man would not work, neither should he eat*, is, in a Manner, a general Law imposed on all Mankind by the Exigency of our State; according to that of Solomon, *The idle Soul shall suffer Hunger; and the Sluggard, who will not plow by Reason of the Cold, shall beg in Harvest, and have Nothing.*

Of all our many Necessities, none can be supplied without Pains; wherein all Men are obliged to bear a Share: Every Man is to work for his Food, for his Apparel, for all his Accommodations, either immediately and directly, or by Commutation and Equivalence; for the Gentleman himself cannot (at least worthily and inculpably) obtain them otherwise, than by redeeming them from the Plowman, and the Artificer by Compensation of other Cares and Pains, conducive to publick Good.

THE wise Poet (*Virgil*) did well observe, when he said,

———— *Pater ipse colendi*
Haud facilem esse viam voluit ———

And St. *Chrysostome* doth propose the same Observation, that God to whet our Mind, would not that we should easily come by the Fruits of the Earth, without employing much Art and Pains; in order thereto there must be Skill used, in observing Seasons, and preparing the Ground; there must be Labour spent in Manuring, in Delving and Plowing, in Sowing, in Weeding, in Fencing it; there must be Pains taken in Reaping, in Gathering, in laying up, in Threshing, and dressing the Fruit before

we can enjoy it : So much Industry is needful to get Bread ; and if we list to fare more daintily, we must either hunt for it, using Craft and Toil to catch it out of the Woods, the Water, the Air ; or we must carefully wait on those Creatures, of which we would serve ourselves, feeding them that they may feed us ; such Industry is required to preserve Mankind from Starving. And to guard it from other Inconveniences, Mischiefs and Dangers surrounding us, it is no less requisite : For to shelter us from Impressions of Weather, we must spin, we must weave, we must build ; and in order thereto we must scrape in the Bowels of the Earth to find our Tools, we must sweat at the Anvil to forge them for our Use ; we must frame Arms to defend our Safety, and our Store from the Assaults of wild Beasts, or more dangerous Neighbours, wild Men. To furnish Accommodations for our Curiosity and Pleasure, or to provide for the Convenience and Ornament of our Life, still greater Measures of Industry are demanded ; to satisfy those Intents, a thousand Contrivances of Art, a thousand Ways of Trade and Business serve, without which they are not attainable. In whatever Condition any Man is, in what State soever he be placed, whatsoever Calling or Way of Life he doth embrace, some peculiar Business is imposed on him, which he cannot with any Advantage, with any Grace, with any Comfort to himself, or Satisfaction to others, manage without Industry : Nothing will go on of itself, without our Care to direct it, and our Pains to hold it, and forward it in the right Course : All which Things shew, that Divine Wisdom did intend we should live in the Exercise of Industry, or not well without it ; having so many Needs to be supplied, so many Desires to be appeased thereby ; being exposed to so many Trou-
bles

bles and Difficulties, from which we cannot extricate ourselves without it. But farther yet,

5. LET us consider, that Industry hath annexed thereto, by Divine Promise, the fairest Fruits, and the richest Rewards: All good Things are the Fruits of Industry, ordered to sprout from it, under the Protection and Influence of God's Blessing.

ALL good Things indeed are the Gifts of God, and freely dispensed by his Hand; but He doth not give them absolutely without Condition, nor miraculously without Concurrence of ordinary Means: By supporting our active Powers, and supplying needful Aid to our Endeavours; by directing and upholding us in the Course of our Action; by preventing or removing Obstacles that might cross us; by granting that Success which dependeth on his Pleasure, He confers them on us: Our Hand commonly is God's Hand, by which He worketh Good, and reacheth out Benefits to us; governing and wielding it as He pleaseth.

GOD indeed could not well proceed otherwise in dispensing his Favours to us; not well, I say, that is, not without subverting the Method of Things which Himself hath established; not without slighting and voiding his own first Bounty, or rendering his common Gifts (our Reason, our Senses, our active Powers) vain and useless; not without making us incapable of any Praise, or any Reward, which suppose Works achieved by our earnest Endeavour; not without depriving us of that sweet Content, which springeth from enjoying the Fruit of our Labour.

HENCE it is, that whatever in Holy Scripture is called the Gift of God, is otherwise affirmed to be

the Effect of Industry; it being the Condition upon which, and the Instrument whereby Divine Providence conveyeth good Things to us: What GOD said to *Joshua*, doth imply the general Method of his Proceeding, *Only be thou strong and courageous — that thou mayst prosper whithersoever thou goest.*

HENCE whatever we are directed to pray for, we are also exhorted to work for; declaring thereby, that we are serious in our Devotion, and do not mock GOD, asking that of Him, which we deem not worth our Pains to acquire. It was well said of *Cato* in *Sallust*: *Vigilando, agendo, consulendo prosperè omnia cedunt, ubi sacordiae te atque ignaviae tradideris, nequicquam Deos implores, irati infestique sunt.* We are bid to pray even for our daily Bread, yet we may starve if we do not work for it; and in *St. Paul's* Judgment, deserve to do so.

HENCE we are bound to thank GOD for all those Things, for the Want of which we must thank ourselves, and condemn our own Sloth.

HENCE although we should cast our Care on GOD, and rely on his Providence, being solicitous for Nothing; yet we must not so trust Him, as to tempt Him, by neglecting the Means, which He doth offer, of relieving ourselves; to be presumptuously slothful, being no less blameable, than to be distrustfully careful.

HENCE GOD in all such Cases, when we need any good Thing, is said to be our Helper to the obtaining it; which doth imply, that we must co-operate with Him, and join our Forces to those which He doth afford; so that as we can do Nothing without Him, so He will do Nothing without us; yea, so that sometime we are said also to
help

help GOD: *Curse ye Meroz, curse ye bitterly the Inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the Help of the LORD; to the Help of the LORD against the Mighty.* If ever GOD doth perform all, without human Labour conspiring, it is only in Behalf of those who are ready to do their best, but unable to do any Thing, being overpowered by the insuperable Difficulty of Things: But He never doth act Miracles, or controul Nature, He never doth stretch forth his Arm, or interpose special Power in Favour of wilful and affected Sluggards.

IN fine, it is very plain, both in common Experience, (declaring the Course of Providence) and in Holy Scripture, (expressing GOD's Intention) that Almighty GOD doth hold forth all good Things, as the Prizes and Recompences of our vigilant Care and painful Endeavour; as by surveying Particulars we may clearly discern.

NOTHING is more grateful to Men, than Success in their Undertakings, whereby they attain their Ends, satisfy their Desires, save their Pains; this commonly is the Effect of Industry, and scarce ever is found without it: An industrious Person, who, as such, is not apt to attempt Things impossible or impracticable, can hardly fail of compassing his Designs, because he will apply all Means requisite, and bend all his Forces thereto; striving to break through all Difficulties, and to subdue all Oppositions thwarting his Purposes: But Nothing of Worth or Weight can be atchieved with half a Mind, with a faint Heart, with a lame Endeavour: Any Enterprize undertaken without Resolution, managed without Care, prosecuted without Vigour, will easily be dashed, ending in Disappointment, Damage, and Dissatisfaction: So the wise Man doth assure us, *The Soul of the Sluggard desireth and hath*

bath Nothing, but the Soul of the Diligent shall be made fat: The one pineth away with ineffectual Desires; the other thriveth upon prosperous Success.

PLENTIFUL Accommodations for our Sustenance and Convenience, Men will agree to be desirable; and these are indeed the Blessings of Him, *who visiteth the Earth, and enricheth it; who crowneth the Year with his Goodness; and whose Clouds drop Fatness; But they are so dispensed by Heaven, that Industry must concur therewith in deriving them to us, and Sloth will debar us of them; for He (saith the Holy Oracle) that tilleth his Land, shall be satisfied with Bread; and the Thoughts of the Diligent alone tendeth to Plenteousness: But the Sluggard shall beg in Harvest, and have Nothing; and the idle Soul shall suffer Hunger.*

WEALTH is that which generally Men are wont to desire, as the great Storehouse of their Needs and Conveniences; and most evident it is, that in the natural Course of Things, Industry is the Way to acquire it, to secure it, to enlarge it; which Course pursued innocently and modestly, God will be so far from obstructing, that He will further and bless it: Indeed it would be a Flaw in Providence, if honest Industry, using the Means it affordeth, should fail of procuring a Competency; which, joined with a pious Contentedness, in St. Paul's Computation, is great Wealth. Wherefore, although Solomon telleth us, that *the Blessing of the LORD is that which maketh rich*; yet he doth not forget or contradict himself, when he doth also affirm, that *the Hand of the Diligent maketh rich*; and that *he who gathereth by Labour shall increase*, because God blesteth the Industrious, and by his
own

own Hand, as the most proper Instrument, maketh him rich.

ANOTHER yet more precious Good, far surpassing all external Advantages, is Wisdom, I mean, right Judgment about Matters of highest Importance to us. Now this is the Prize of Industry, and not to be gained without it: Nature conferreth little thereto, Fortune much less; it cannot be bought at any Rate: *It cannot (saith Job) be gotten for Gold, neither shall Silver be weighed for the Price thereof: It cannot be valued with the Gold of Ophir, with the precious Onyx, or the Sapphire:* It is the Off-spring of watchful Observation and Experience, of serious Meditation and Study; of careful Reflection on Things, marking, comparing and weighing their Nature, their Worth, their Tendencies and Consequences: These are needful to the getting of Wisdom; because Truth, which it seeketh commonly, doth not lie in the Surface, obvious to a superficial Glance, nor only dependeth on a simple Consideration of few Things; but is lodged deep in the Bowels of Things, and under a knotty Complication of various Matters; so that we must dig to come at it, and labour in unfolding it; nor is it an easy Task to avoid the Prejudices springing from Inclination and Temper, from Education or Custom, from Passion and Interest, which cloud the Mind, and obstruct the Attainment of Wisdom.

If we will have it, we must get it as Solomon himself did, that great Master of it: How was that? *I gave (saith he) my Heart to know Wisdom:* He, who made it his Choice before all Things; who so earnestly and so happily pray'd for it; upon whom it is so expressly said, that GOD in a plentiful Measure did bestow it; who averreth GOD to be the sole Donor of it, (*for the LORD, saith he, giveth Wisdom,*

Wisdom, out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Understanding) even he, did first give his Heart to it, before it was given into his Heart : He did not only gape for it, to receive it by mere Infusion ; but he worked and studied hard for it : He was indeed a great Student, an inquisitive Searcher into Nature, a curious Observer of the World, a profound Considerer and Comparer of Things ; and by that industrious Course, promoted by Divine Blessing, he arrived at that Stock of renowned Wisdom.

AND the same Method it is, which he prescribeth to us ; exhorting us, that *we incline our Ear unto Wisdom, and apply our Heart to Understanding ; that we cry after Knowledge, and lift up our Voice for Understanding ; that we seek her as Silver, and search for her as for hid Treasures ;* in following which Course he doth assure us of good Success ; for *then* (saith he) *shalt thou understand the Fear of the LORD, and find the Knowledge of GOD, which is the chief Part of Wisdom.*

THIS indeed is the only Way ; Idleness is not capable of so rich and noble a Purchase ; a slothful Person may be conceited, but he can never be wise ; *A Sluggard* (saith *Salomon*) *is wiser in his own Conceit, than seven Men that can render a Reason ;* this Conceit of Wisdom is a natural Issue of his Ignorance ; and it is indeed no small Part of his Folly, that he doth not perceive it ; being no less stupid in Reflection on his own Mind, than in considering other Matters : Being always in a Slumber, he will often fall into such pleasant Dreams ; and no Wonder that he should presume upon abundance of Knowledge, who not listning to take any Pains in the Search of Things, doth snatch the first Appearances, doth embrace every
Suggestion

Suggestion of his Fancy, every Conceit gratifying his Humour, for Truth.

WHAT should I speak of Learning, or the Knowledge of various Things, transcending vulgar Apprehension? Who knoweth not that we cannot otherwise reach any Part of that than by assiduous Study and Contemplation? Who doth not find that all the Power in the World is not able to command, nor all the Wealth of the *Indies* to purchase one Notion? Who can be ignorant that no Wit alone, or Strength of Parts can suffice, without great Industry, to frame any Science, to learn any one Tongue, to know the History of Nature, or of Providence? It is certainly by *Horace's* Method,

Multa tulit, fecitque puer, ———

by much Exercise and Endurance of Pains, that any one can arrive to the Mark of being learned or skilful in any Sort of Knowledge.

BUT farther yet, Virtue, the noblest Endowment, and richest Possession whereof Man is capable; the Glory of our Nature, the Beauty of our Soul, the goodliest Ornament, and the firmest Support of our Life; that also is the Fruit and Blessing of Industry; that of all Things most indispensibly doth require it. It doth not grow in us by Nature, nor befall us by Fortune; for Nature is so far from producing it, that it yieldeth mighty Obstacles to its Birth, there being in the best Dispositions much Averseness from all Good, and great Proneness to all Evil; Fortune doth not further it, but casteth in Rubs and Hindrances thereto, every Condition presenting its Allurements, or its Affrightments from it; all Things within

within us and about us conspire to render its Production and its Practice laborious.

It is (it is true) a Gift of Heaven, and cannot be obtained without a special Influence of Divine Grace; but it is given as Children are (of whom it is said, *Lo Children are an Heritage of the LORD, and the Fruit of the Womb is his Reward*) not without sore Travail and Labour of the Mother, not without grievous Difficulty and Pangs in the Birth: In our Conversion to embrace Virtue God doth guide us; but to what? To sit still; no, to walk, to run in his Ways; Grace doth move us, but whereto? To do Nothing; no, but to stir and act vigorously; *The Holy Spirit doth help our Infirmities*; but how could it help them, if we did not conjoin our best (tho' weak) Endeavours with its Operations? To what doth it *συναρτιλαμβάνειν*, or co-help us, but to *strive against Sin, to work Righteousness*, to perform Duty with earnest Intention of Mind, and laborious Activity? "God (saith St. Chrysostome) hath parted Virtue with us, and neither hath left all to be in us, lest we should be elated to Pride, nor Himself hath taken all, lest we should decline to Sloth."

ACCORDINGLY our Growth in Grace implies the most difficult Efforts of Soul; the extirpating rooted Prejudices and Notions from our Understanding; the bending a stiff Will, and rectifying crooked Inclinations; the over-ruling a rebellious Temper; curbing eager and importunate Appetites; taming wild Passions; withstanding violent Temptations; surmounting many Difficulties, and sustaining many Troubles; the struggling with various unruly Lusts within, and encountering many stout Enemies abroad, which assault our Faith, and *war against the Soul*: On such Exercises

cises its Growth, its Subsistence dependeth; so that from any Discontinuance or Remission of them it would soon decay, languish away, and perish.

WHAT Attention, what Circumspection and Vigilancy of Mind, what Intention of Spirit, what Force of Resolution, what Command and Care over ourselves doth it require to keep our Hearts from vain Thoughts and evil Desires; to guard our Tongue from wanton, unjust, uncharitable Discourse; to order our Steps uprightly and steadily in all Paths of Duty? "And what (as St. *Chrysostome* asketh) of all Things belonging to "Virtue is not laborious?" It is no small Task to know it, wherein it consisteth, and what it demandeth of us; it is a far more painful Thing to conform our Practice unto its Rules and Dictates.

If travelling in a rough Way, if climbing up a steep Hill, if combating stern Foes, and fighting sharp Battles, if crossing the Grain of our Nature and Desires, if continually holding a strict Rein over all our Parts and Powers, be Things of Labour and Trouble, then greatly such is the Practice of Virtue.

INDEED each Virtue hath its peculiar Difficulty, needing much Labour to master it: *Faith* is called *ἔργον πίστεως*, the *Work of Faith*; and it is no such easy Work, as may be imagined, to bring our Hearts unto a thorough Persuasion about Truths crossing our sensual Conceits, and controlling our peevish Humours, unto a perfect Submission of our Understanding, and Resignation of our Will to whatever GOD teacheth or prescribeth; to a firm Resolution of adhering to that Profession

which exacteth of us so much Pains, and exposeth us to so many Troubles.

CHARITY also implies a laborious Exercise of many good Works, and he that will practise it must in divers Ways labour hardly: He must labour in voiding from his Soul many Dispositions deeply radicated therein by Nature, Opinion and Custom, Envy, Frowardness, Stubbornness, perverse and vain Selfishness, from whence Wrath, Revenge, Spite and Malice spring forth; he must labour in effectual Performance of all good Offices, and in catching all Occasions of doing Good; he must exert that *Labour of Love*, whereof St. *Paul* speaketh; he must (as that holy Apostle directeth, not only in Precept, but by his own Practice) work with his own Hands, that he may supply the Wants of his Neighbour.

HOPE itself (which one would think, when grounded well, should be a no less easy than pleasant Duty) doth need much Labour to preserve it safe and stable, among the many Waves and Billows of Temptation assaying to shake and subvert it; whence *Patience of Hope* is recommended to us; and we so often are exhorted to hold it fast, to keep it sure, firm and unshaken to the End.

TEMPERANCE also demandeth no small Pains; it being no light Business to check our greedy Appetites, to shun the Enticements of Pleasure, to escape the Snares of Company and Example, to support the Ill-will and Reproaches of those Zealots and Bigots for Vice; who cannot tolerate any Non-conformity to their Extravagancies; but (as St. *Peter* expresseth it) *think it strange if others do not run with them to the same Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of them.*

WHAT

WHAT should I speak of *Meekness*, of *Patience*, of *Humility*, of *Contentedness*? Is it not manifest how laborious those Virtues are, and what Pains are necessary in the obtaining, in the Exercise of them? What Pains, I say, they require in the Suppression of froward Humours, in the quelling fierce Passions, in the brooking grievous Crosses and Adversities, in the bearing heinous Injuries and Affronts?

THUS doth all Virtue require much Industry, and it therefore necessarily must itself be a great Virtue, which is the Mother, the Nurse, the Guardian of all Virtues; yea which indeed is an Ingredient and constitutive Part of every Virtue; for if Virtue were easily obtainable or practicable without a good Measure of Pains, how could it be Virtue? What Excellency could it have, what Praise could it have, what Reward could it expect? God hath indeed made the best Things not easily obtainable, hath set them out of our Reach, to exercise our Industry in getting them, that we might raise ourselves up to them, that being obtained they may the more deserve our Esteem, and his Reward.

LASTLY, The sovereign Good, the last Scope of our Actions, the Top and Sum of our Desires, Happiness itself, or eternal Life in perfect Rest, Joy and Glory; although it be the supreme Gift of God, and special Boon of Divine Grace, (*the Gift of God's Grace is eternal Life*) yet it also by God Himself is declared to be the Result or Reward of Industry; for we are commanded *to work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling; and to give Diligence in making our Calling and Election sure: And God* (saith St. Paul) *will render to every Man according to his Works; to them, who by patient Con-*

tinuance in Well-doing, seek Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, eternal Life: And in the Close of God's Book it is proclaimed, as a Truth of the greatest Moment, Blessed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have Right to the Tree of Life. It is plainly Industry, which climbeth the holy Mount; it is Industry, which taketh the Kingdom of Heaven by Force; it is Industry, which so runneth as to obtain the Prize, which so fighteth as to receive the Crown, which so watcheth as to secure our everlasting Interest to us.

THUS do the choicest good Things, of which we are capable, spring from Industry, or depend upon it; and no considerable Good can be attained without it: Thus all the Gifts of God are by it conveyed to us, or are rendered in Effect beneficial to us; for the Gifts of Nature are but Capacities, which it improveth; the Gifts of Fortune or Providence are but Instruments, which it employeth to our Use; the Gifts of Grace are the Supports and Succours of it; and the very Gift of Glory is its Fruit and Recompence.





S E R M O N IX.

*Of Industry in our general Calling,
as Christians.*



ROM. xii. 11.

Not slothful in Business

INDUSTRY is a very eminent Virtue, being an Ingredient (or the Parent) of all other Virtues, of constant Use upon all Occasions, and having Influence upon all our Affairs.

FOR it is our Nature framed; all our Powers of Soul and Body being fitted for it, requiring it for their Preservation and Perfection.

WE were designed for it in our first happy State; and upon our Lapse thence were farther doomed to

ity, as the sole Remedy of our Needs and the Inconveniences, to which we became exposed. For

WITHOUT it we cannot well sustain or secure our Life in the Enjoyment of any Comfort or Convenience; we must work to earn our Food, our Cloathing, our Shelter; and to supply every Indigency of Accommodations, which our Nature doth crave.

To it GOD hath annexed the best, and most desirable Rewards; Success to our Undertakings, Wealth, Wisdom, Virtue, Salvation; all which as they flow from GOD's Bounty, and depend on his Blessing; so from them they are usually conveyed to us through our Industry, as the ordinary Channel and Instrument of attaining them.

IT is requisite to us even for procuring Ease, and preventing a Necessity of immoderate Labour.

It is in itself sweet and satisfactory; as freeing our Mind from Distraction, and wrecking Irresolution; as feeding us with good Hope, and yielding a Foretaste of its good Fruits.

IT furnisheth us with Courage to attempt, and Resolution to atchieve Things needful, worthy of us, and profitable to us.

IT is attended with a good Conscience, and chearful Reflections, of having well spent our Time, and employed our Talents to good Advantage.

IT sweetneth our Enjoyments, and seasoneth our Attainments with a delightful Relish.

It

It is the Guard of Innocence, and barreth out Temptations to Vice, to Wantonness, to vain Curiosity and Pragmaticalness.

It is necessary for every Condition and Station, for every Calling, for every Relation; no Man without it being able to deport himself well in any State, to manage any Business, to discharge any Sort of Duty.

To it the World is indebted for all the Culture, which advanceth it above rude and sordid Barbarism; for whatever in common Life is comely, or useful, Industry hath contrived it, Industry hath composed and framed it.

It is recommended to us by all Sort of Patterns considerable; for all Nature is continually busy and active in Tendency toward its proper Designs; Heaven and Earth work in uncessant Motion; every living Creature is employed in procuring its Sustainance; the blessed Spirits are always on the Wing in dispatching the Commands of God, and ministering Succour to us; God Himself is ever watchful, and ever busy in preserving the World, and providing for the Needs of every Creature.

THE Lives of our blessed Saviour, of all the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Saints in this Respect have been more exemplary; no Virtue being more conspicuous in their Practice than Industry in performing the hard Duties, and painful Tasks imposed on them for the Service of God, and the Benefit of Mankind.

SUCH is the Virtue upon which I have formerly discoursed in general, but shall now more specially consider,

consider, in Reference to its most proper Matter, Business, explaining and pressing it accordingly.

BE *not slothful in Business* (that is in Discharge of it) or to Business (that is to undertake it) this is the Rule; the Nature and Needfulness whereof we shall declare.

BY *σπουδή* (Business) we may understand any Object of our Care and Endeavours which doth require them, and may deserve them; which by Reason of its Difficulty cannot well be accomplished or attained without them; and which is productive of some Fruit or Recompence answerable to them.

THE proper Object of our Industry, is true Business; or that which is incumbent on a Man to do, either in Way of Duty, being required by God; or by Dictate of Reason, as conducing to some good Purpose; so that in Effect it will turn to Account, and finally will pay him for his Labour of Mind or Body; that which the Wise Man did intend, when he advised, *Whatever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might*; whatever thy Hand findeth, that is, whatever by Divine Appointment (by the Command or Providence of God) or which upon rational Deliberation, doth occur as Matter of our Action; comprising every good Purpose and reasonable Undertaking incident to us.

BUT our Business, according to the holy Apostle's Intent, may be supposed especially to be the Work of our Calling; to which each Man hath a peculiar Obligation; and which therefore is most properly his Business.

Now this Business, our Calling, is double; our general Calling, which is common to us all as Christians;

stians; and our particular Calling, which peculiarly belongeth to us, as placed in a certain Station, either in the Church or State. In both which Vocations that we are much obliged and concerned to be industrious, shall be now my Business to declare.

I. As to our general Calling (that sublime, that heavenly, that holy Vocation) in which by Divine Grace, according to the evangelical Dispensation, we are engaged, that necessarily requireth, and most highly deserveth from us a great Measure of Industry; the Nature and Design of it requireth, the Fruit and Result of it deserveth our utmost Diligence; all Sloth is inconsistent with discharging the Duties, with enjoying the Hopes, and obtaining the Benefits thereof. For,

It is a State of continual Work, and is expressed in Terms importing abundant, incessant, intense Care and Pain; for to be indeed Christians, *We must work out our Salvation with Fear and Trembling: We must by patient Continuance in Well-doing seek for Glory, Honour and Immortality. We must walk worthy of the LORD to all Well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work: We must be rich in good Works, and filled with the Fruits of Righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the Praise and Glory of GOD: We are GOD's Workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, which GOD hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

WE have a Mind to improve with Virtue and Wisdom, qualifying us for Entrance into Heaven, for Enjoyment of GOD's Favour, for Conversation with Angels.

As

As Christians we are assumed to be Servants of GOD, and re-admitted into his Family, from which for our Disloyalty we had been discarded; so that as He was our natural LORD, so He is now such also by special Grace; who did make us, who doth maintain us, under whose Protection, and at whose Disposall we subsist; whence we are obliged to be faithfully diligent in his Service; we must constantly wait upon Him in devotional Addresses; we must carefully study to know his Pleasure; we must endeavour exactly to perform his Will; we must strive to advance his Glory, to promote his Interest, to improve all Talents and Advantages committed to us for those Purposes; we must (as St. Paul expresseth it) *always abound in the Work of the LORD.*

WE must also look upon ourselves as Servants of *Christ* our Redeemer; who by his Blood hath purchased us to Himself, that we might be *zealous of good Works*; performing a Service to Him, which consisteth in a faithful Discharge of manifold Duties; and in Pursuance of all Virtue; with most intent Application of Mind, with expedite Promptitude, with accurate Circumspection; *giving all Diligence* (as St. Peter speaketh) in adding one Virtue to another; *being ready* (as St. Paul saith) *to every good Work*; and *seeing that we walk circumspectly*, or behave ourselves exactly according to the Rules of Duty in all our Conversation.

THIS Service requireth of us assiduous Attendance on Works of Piety and Devotion; that we *incessantly watch to Prayers*, that we *always give Thanks*, that we *continually offer up the Sacrifice of Praise to GOD.*

It demandeth from us a continual *Labour of Charity*; that we *serve one another in Love*; that we should as we have Opportunity, *work Good to all Men*, that we should *always pursue Good toward one another, and toward all Men.*

It obligeth us *with all our Powers, to pursue Peace with all Men* (which considering our natural Peevishness, Pride, and Perverseness is often no easy Task) and that we do *σπουδαίον, studiously endeavour to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.*

It chargeth on us contentedly and patiently to undergo whatever God doth impose of Burthen or Sufferance, so that *Patience have its perfect Work*; and it is a crabbed Work, to bend our stiff Inclinations, to quell our refractory Passions, to make our sturdy Humour buckle thereto.

It doth exact that we should govern and regulate, according to very strict Laws, all the Faculties of our Soul, all the Members of our Body, all internal Motions, and all external Actions, proceeding from us; that we should check our Inclinations, curb our Appetites, and compose our Passions; that we should guard our Hearts from vain Thoughts and Desires; that we should bridle our Tongues from evil and from idle Discourses; that we should order our Steps in the streight Way of Righteousness, not deflecting to the right Hand or to the left.

In the Discharge of this Service how many rough Difficulties are there to be surmounted, how many great Obstacles to be removed, now many stout Oppositions to be encountered, how many potent Enemies to be vanquished, how many sore Hardships, Crosses and Tribulations to be endured?

How

How shrewd a Task must we find it, to mortify our earthly Members, to crucify our Flesh with its Affections and Lusts, to pull out our right Eyes, and cut off our right Hands, to renounce our worldly Interests, to hate our nearest Relations, to take up, and bear our Cross; whenever Conscience calleth us thereto?

OUR Calling therefore doth require great Industry; and the Business of it consequently is well represented by those Performances, which demand the greatest Intention, and laborious Activity; It is stiled *Exercise*, (agonistick and ascetick Exercise; γυμνασι σιαυτις προς ευσκελαι, *Exercise thyself to Godliness*; and ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ ἀσκη, *Herein I exercise myself to have always a Conscience void of Offence toward GOD and toward Men*;) *Wrestling*, (ἡμῶν ἐν πάλῳ, *Our Wrestling is not only against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities and Powers*;) *Running a Race*, (Let us run with Patience the Race that is set before us; so run that we may obtain; I press toward the Mark for the Prize of the high Calling.) *A Warfare*, a *Combating*, (*War a good Warfare, holding Faith and a good Conscience; fight the good Fight; thou therefore endure Hardship as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ; Every Man that striveth for the Mastery is temperate in all Things*;) offering *Violence*; (*The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence; and the Violent take it by Force*) *Watching*, (Let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober; Watch ye, stand fast in the Faith, quit you like Men, be strong.

HENCE the Precepts importing the general Tenor of christian Practice are usually couched in Terms implying great Sedulity and Contention of Soul; Ἀγωνίζεσθε, *Strive to enter at the strait Gate; Let us labour therefore to enter into that Rest; Labour*

bour not for the Meat that perisheth, but for that Meat which endureth to everlasting Life; Give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure; Gird up the Loins of your Mind, be sober and hope to the End; Wherefore, Brethren, seeing that ye look for such Things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in Peace, without Spot and blameless.

SUCH is the Work of our general Calling, and so much Industry it challengeth from us; with great Reason indeed, for that such Work is needful to our Happiness, and that our Labour will certainly be rewarded therewith.

THE Work indeed of itself is most worthy to employ us; doth most become us, doth much adorn us, doth best besit our Divine Extraction and large Capacity; is the noblest, the sweetest Employment that could take us up; but we have also the greatest Inducements and Encouragements possible for our Industry therein.

THERE are by the Divine Mercy Wages assigned abundantly correspondent to our Work, yea infinitely surpassing it; there is a great (or a manifold) Hire for our slender and simple Performances; there are several noble Prizes highly worth our striving for with our utmost Strength and Contention of Soul.

IN Recompence thereof we assuredly enjoy in this transitory State the special Favour and Love of God, with his constant Protection and Care for our Good; his faithful Direction, and friendly Assistance to guide us, and uphold us in all our Ways, to bless and prosper our Undertaking, to supply us in our Needs, and comfort us in our Distresses; so that we shall lack nothing that is Good, that no

Evil shall happen to us, that all Things shall work together for our Good.

WE shall thereby taste the Satisfaction of a calm Mind, and a sound Conscience, quickned by the Consolations of the Divine Spirit; *the Peace of God ruling in our Hearts, which passeth all Understanding.*

WE shall afterward, when this Moment is passed over, and our short Day's Work dispatched, receive from GOD's bountiful Hand an unconceivable Affluence of good Things, an eternal Permanence of Life; undisturbed Rest, indefectible Wealth, ineffable Joy, incorruptible Glory, *a Kingdom unshakeable.*

HE (saith our LORD) *that reapeth, receiveth Wages, and gathereth Fruit unto Life everlasting.*

TO them (saith St. Paul) *who by patient Continuance in Well-doing seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, GOD in Recompence will bestow eternal Life.* And,

I HAVE (saith the blessed Labourer of himself) *fought the good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness.*

WHAT more effectual Incentive can there be to Industry in this Business, than to consider that which St. Paul so often doth inculcate; *Knowing that whatsoever good Thing any Man doeth, the same (a Recompence for the same) he shall receive of the LORD; and knowing that (in Consideration of our Service done to the LORD) of the LORD we shall receive the Reward of the Inheritance.*

WHAT

WHAT Exhortation can be more firmly grounded, or strongly backed, than is that of the Apostle, *Therefore my Brethren be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the LORD; forasmuch as ye know, that your Labour is not in vain in the LORD?*

MAY it not also much encourage us to Industry to be assured, that not only the Kind of our Work, but the Degree of our Labour shall be considered and requited, in just Proportion; so that the harder we Work, the higher we shall be rewarded, for, *to each one* (saith our LORD) *the Son of Man shall render a Reward* κατὰ τὴν ἰσχύαν αὐτοῦ according to his Performance; *every one* (saith St. Paul) shall receive ἰδίον μισθὸν κατὰ τὸν ἰδίον ἔργον his proper Reward according to his proper Work; whence we have Reason to observe St. John's Advice, *Look to yourselves, that ye lose not those Things which ye have gained, but that ye receive a full Reward.*

To be negligent or slothful in such a Case, for Want of a little Care and Pains to forfeit such Advantages, what a Pity, what a Folly is it? Were an Opportunity presented by a little minding our Business, and bestirring ourselves to procure a fair Estate, or good Preferment, would not he be deemed mad, who should sit still, and forego that Advantage? How much more Wildness is it to be drowsy and sluggish in this Case, thereby losing eternal Bliss and Glory? Well therefore might the Apostle say, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?* How shall we escape not only the Sin, and Guilt of basest Ingratitude toward Him that graciously doth offer it, but the Imputation of most wretched Folly, in being so much wanting to our own Interest?

Is it not a sad Thing, to observe what Pains Men will throw away upon Things of small or no Concernment to them? Yea what Toil and Drudgery they will sustain in the Service of *Satan*, in Pursuit of Sin, in the Gratification of their Vanities and Lusts?

WHAT Pains will a covetous Wretch take in scraping for Pelf, how will he rack his Mind with carking Sollicitude to get, to keep, to spare it? How will he tire his Spirits with restless Travel? How will he pinch his Carcase for Want of what Nature craveth? What Infamy and Obloquy will he endure for his niggardly Parsimony and Sordidness?

How much Labour will an ambitious Man undergo for Preferment, or vain Honour? To how many tedious Attendances, to how pitiful Servilities will he submit? What sore Crosses and Disappointments will he swallow, what Affronts and Indignities will he digest, without desisting from his Enterprize?

How will a Man (as St. *Paul* observed) *πάσχει ὑποταγῆς*, endure all painful Abstinence and Continence in Order to the obtaining a corruptible Crown, a fading Garland of Bays, a Puff of vain Applause?

WHAT Diligence will Men use to compass the Enjoyment of forbidden Pleasures; how watchful in catching Opportunities, how eager in Quest of them will they be; what Difficulties will they undertake, what Hazards will they incur, what Inconveniences will they sustain rather than fail of satisfying their Desires?

WHAT

WHAT Akings of Head and Heart, what Pangs of Mind, what Anxieties of Regret and Fear, will every Worker of Iniquity undergo? So faithful Friends hath this vain and evil World; so diligent Servants hath the accursed Lord thereof; so carefull and laborious will Men be to destroy and damn themselves: O that we could be willing to spend as much Care and Pains in the Service of our GOD; O that we were as true Friends of ourselves. O that we could be as industrious for our Salvation; that is, in the Business of our general Calling; which having considered, let us proceed to the other Business belonging to us; which is.

II. THE Business of our particular Calling; that in Reference whereto St. Paul doth prescribe, *Every Man as the LORD hath called him, so let him walk.* Let every Man abide in the same Calling wherein he was called; let him so abide, as faithfully to prosecute the Work, and discharge the Duty of it; the Doing which elsewhere he termeth *καρποῦν τὰ ἴδια*, to do our own Business (working with our Hands) and injoineth it in Opposition to those two great Pests of Life, Sloth and pragmatical Curiosity; or the Neglect of our own, and meddling with other Mens Affairs.

THIS the Apostle nameth *our Calling*, because we are called or appointed thereto by Divine Providence; for he taketh it for granted, that to each Man in this World GOD hath assigned a certain Station, unto which peculiar Action is suited; in which Station he biddeth him quietly to abide, 'till Providence fairly doth translate him, and during his Abode therein diligently to execute the Work thereof.

EVERY Man is a Member of a double Body, of the Civil Commonwealth, and of the Christian Church; in Relation to the latter whereof St. Paul telleth us (and what he saith by Parity of Reason may be referred likewise to the former) that *GOD hath set the Members every one in the Body, as it pleaseth Him*; and as it is in the natural, so it is in every political and spiritual Body, every Member hath its proper Use and Function; *All Members, (saith St. Paul) have not the same Office, or the same Work and Operation*; yet every one hath some Work. There is no Member designed to be idle or useless, conferring no Benefit to the whole; but *the whole Body (saith the Apostle) fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every Joint supplieth, according to the effectual Working in the Measure of every Part, maketh Increase of the Body, unto the edifying itself in Love*; each Member doth conspire and co-operate to the Strength, Nourishment, Thriving, and Welfare of the whole.

EVERY Man (who continueth a Man; in his Senses, or in any good Degree of natural Integrity) is by GOD endowed with competent Abilities to discharge some Function, useful to common Good; to every one some Talent is committed, which in Subordination to GOD's Service he may improve, to the Benefit of the World, GOD's temporal; or of the Church, GOD's spiritual Kingdom.

It is plainly necessary, that the greatest Part of Men should have a determinate Work allotted to them, that they may support their Life and get their Food without being injurious, offensive, or burthensome to others; for their Living they must either follow some Trade, or they must
shark

shark and filch, or they must beg, or they must starve.

AND the rest are obliged to do somewhat, conducive to publick Good; that they may deserve to live; for a Drone should not be among the Bees; nor hath Right to devour the Honey: If any Man doth pretend, or presume that he hath nothing to do but to eat, to sleep, to play, to laugh; to enjoy his Ease, his Pleasure, his Humour, he thereby doth as it were disclaim a reasonable Title of living among Men, and sharing in the Fruits of their Industry.

SUCH an one in the Body of Men what is he but an unnatural Excrescence, sucking Nutriment from it, without yielding Ornament or Use? What is he but a Wen deforming and encumbering the Body, or a Canker infesting and corrupting it?

As no Man (at least with Decency, Convenience and Comfort) can live in the World, without being obliged to divers other Men for their Help in providing Accomodations for him, so Justice and Ingenuity (corroborated by Divine Sanction) require of him, that in Commutation he, one Way or other, should undertake some Pains redounding to the Benefit of others.

So hath the great Author of Order distributed the Ranks and Offices of Men, in order to mutual Benefit and Comfort; that one Man should plow, another thresh, another grind, another labour at the Forge, another knit or weave; another sail, another trade, another supervise all these, labouring to keep them all in Order and Peace; that

one should work with his Hands and Feet, another with Head and Tongue; all conspiring to one common End, the Welfare of the whole, and the Supply of what is useful to each particular Member. Every Man so reciprocally obliging and being obliged; the Prince being obliged to the Husbandman for his Bread, to the Weaver for his Cloaths, to the Mason for his Palace, to the Smith for his Sword; those being all obliged to him for his vigilant Care in protecting them; for their Security in pursuing the Work, and enjoying the Fruit of their Industry.

So every Man hath a Calling, and proper Business; whereto that Industry is required, I need not much to prove, the Thing in Reason and Experience being so evident; for what Business can be well dispatched, what Success can be expected to any Undertaking, in what Calling can any Man thrive without Industry? What Business is there that will go on, or proceed to any good Issue, if we do not carefully look to it, steadily hold it in its Course, constantly push and drive it forwards? It is true as in Nature, so in all Affairs, Nothing moveth without being moved.

Our own Interest should move us to be industrious in our Calling, that we may obtain the good Effects, of being in a comfortable Subsistence; that we may not suffer the Damages and Wants, the Disappointments and Disgraces ensuing on Sloth; but the chief Motive should be from Piety and Conscience; for that it is a Duty which we owe to God. For God having placed us in our Station; he having apportioned to us our Task, we being in Transaction of our Business his Servants, we owe to Him that necessary Property of good Servants, without which Fidelity cannot subsist

subsist; for how can he be looked on as a faithful Servant, who doth not effectually perform the Work charged on him; or diligently execute the Orders of his Master?

ST. Paul doth enjoin Servants, that they should in all Things obey their Masters, with conscientious Regard to GOD, as therein performing Service to GOD, and expecting Recompence from Him; and of Princes he saith, that they in Dispensation of Justice, enacting Laws, imposing Taxes, and all political Administrations, are the Ministers of GOD attending constantly upon this very Thing: And if these Extremes, the highest and lowest of all Vocations, are Services of GOD; if the highest upon that Score be tied to so much Diligence, then surely all middle Places, upon the same Account of Conscience toward GOD exact no less.

If he that hath one Talent, and he that hath ten must both improve them for GOD's Interest, then he that hath two, or three, or more, is obliged to the same Duty proportionably.

EVERY one should consider the World as the Family of that great Pater-familias (of whom the whole Family in Heaven and Earth is named) and himself as an Officer or Servant therein, by GOD's Will and Designation constituted in that Employment, into which Providence hath cast him; to confer in his Order and Way somewhat toward a Provision for the Maintenance of himself, and of his Fellow-servants. Of a superior Officer our LORD saith, *Who is that faithful and wise Servant, whom his LORD hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them their Meat in due Season?* So the greatest Men are as Stewards, Treasurers, Controllers,

lers, or Purveyers; the rest are inferior Servants in their proper Rank and Capacity.

AND he that with Diligence performeth his respective Duty (be it high and honourable, or mean and contemptible in outward Appearance) will please GOD, as keeping good Order and as being useful to his Service; so that upon the Reckoning GOD will say to Him, *Well done good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few Things; I will make thee Ruler over many Things; enter thou into the Joy of thy LORD.* But he that doth otherwise (behaving himself carelessly, or sluggishly in his Business) will offend GOD, as committing Disorder, and being unprofitable.

HE committeth Disorder according to that of St. Paul, *We hear there are some, which walk among you disorderly, not working at all.* His Sentence and Doom will be, according to our LORD, *O thou wicked and slothful Servant—Cast the unprofitable Servant into utter Darknefs;* which Words are spoken in Relation to one, who being a Flatterer or Sluggard in his Calling did not improve the special Talent entrusted with him for GOD's Service.

IN fine, if we are conscientiously industrious in our Vocation, we shall assuredly find the Blessing of GOD thereon; and that He thereby will convey good Success, Comfort, competent Wealth, all desirable Good unto us; for all these Things are promised to Industry, so the Promise especially doth belong to that Industry, which a Man doth exercise in an orderly Course of Action in his own Way; or rather in GOD's Way, wherein Divine Providence hath set him.

AN irregular or impertinent Laboriousness, out of a Man's Calling or Sphere; a being diligent in other Mens Affairs, invading their Office may not claim the Benefit of those Promises, or the Blessings of Industry: But a Husbandman, who (with conscientious Regard to God, and Confidence in Him) is painful in tilling his Ground, may expect a good Crop; a Merchant who (upon the same Principle, with the like Disposition) earnestly followeth his Trade, may hope for safe Voyages and good Markets; a Prince carefully minding his Affairs may look for Peace and Prosperity to his Country; a Scholar studying hard may be well assured of getting Knowledge, and finding Truth; all who with honest Diligence constantly pursue their own Business may confidently and chearfully hope to reap the Advantages suitable to it from the favourable Blessing of God. So that we have all Reason to observe the Apostle's Precept, *not to be slothful in Business.*

Now the God of Peace sanctify you wholly, and make you perfect in every good Work to do his Will; working in you that which is well-pleasing in his Sight; through our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom for ever be all Glory and Praise. Amen.





S E R M O N X.

The Unsearchableness of God's Judgments.



ROM. xi. 33.

How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out?

THESE Words are the Close of a Disputation, wherein St. Paul was engaged with the Advocates of *Judaism*, concerning God's Providence towards his ancient People, in rejecting the greatest Part of them, upon their Refusal to embrace the Christian Doctrine; and in admitting the *Gentile* World to Favour, upon its Compliance with the Overtures thereof, proposed in the Gospel. In this Proceeding those *Infidels* could not discern God's Hand, nor would allow such a Dispensation worthy of Him, advancing

eing several Exceptions against it : GOD (said they) having espoused and consecrated us to Himself; having to our Fathers, in Regard to their Piety, made so absolute Promises of Benediction on their Posterity; how can it consist with his Wisdom, with his Justice, with his Fidelity, with his Constancy, to abandon us? Doth not this Dealing argue his former Affections to have been misplaced; doth it not implead his ancient Covenant; doth it not supplant his own Designs, and unravel all that He for so many Ages hath been doing? Upon such Accounts did this Dispensation appear very strange and scandalous to them : But *St. Paul*, being infallibly assured of its Truth, undertakes to vindicate it from all Misprisions, rendring a fair Account of it, and assigning for it many satisfactory Reasons, drawn from the general Equity of the Case, from the Nature of GOD, his Attributes, and his Relations to Men; from the Congruity of this Proceeding to the Tenour of GOD's Providence, to his most ancient Purposes, to the true Intent of his Promises, to his express Declarations and Predictions; to the State of Things in the World, and the pressing Needs of all Mankind : Such Reasons (I say which I have not Time explicitly to relate) doth the Apostle produce in Favour of this great Dispensation; which sufficed to clear it from all their Objections; yet notwithstanding, after he had steered his Discourse through all these Rocks he thought it safe to cast Anchor; winding up the Contest in this modest Intimation, that whatever he could say, might not perhaps exhaust the Difficulty, that therefore in this and in all such Cases, for entire Satisfaction, we should have Recourse to the incomprehensible Wisdom of GOD, who frequently in the Course of his Providence doth act upon Grounds, and ordereth Things in Methods transcending our Ability to discover

or trace; To consider some Causes and Reasons of which Incomprehensibility, and to ground thereon some practical Advices will be the Scope of my Discourse; The Reasons may be these:

1. As the Dealings of wise Men sometimes are founded upon Maxims, and admit Justifications not obvious, nor penetrable by vulgar Minds, so may God act according to Rules of Wisdom and Justice; which it may be impossible by our Faculties to apprehend.

As there are natural Modes of Being and Operation (such as God's necessary Subsistence, his Production of Things from Nothing, his Eternity without Succession, his Immensity without Extension, his Prescience without Necessitation of Events, his ever acting, but never changing; and the like) so there may be prudential and moral Rules of proceeding far above our Reach; so God Himself telleth us: *As the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts.* Some of them we may be incapable to know, because of our finite Nature; they being peculiar Objects of Divine Wisdom, and not to be understood by any Creature; For as God cannot impart the Power of doing all Things possible, so may He not communicate the Faculty of knowing all Things intelligible; that being indeed to ungod Himself, or to deprive Himself of his Peerless Supremacy in Wisdom; hence is He stiled *the only wise God*; hence *He chargeth the Angels with Folly*; hence the most illuminate Seraphim veil their Faces before Him.

OTHER such Rules we may not be able to perceive from the Meanness of our Nature, or our low Rank among Creatures; for beneath Omnis-

science

science there being innumerable Forms of Intelligence, in the lowest of these we sit, one Remove from Beasts; being endowed with Capacities, suitable to that inferiour Station, and to those meaner Employments, for which we were designed, and framed; whence our Mind hath a Pitch, beyond which it cannot soar; and Things clearly intelligible to more noble Creatures, moving in a higher Orb, may be dark and inexplicable to us: *As an Angel of GOD, so is my LORD the King, to discern Good and Bad,* was an Expression importing this Difference, how those glorious Creatures overtop us in intellectual Capacities.

Also divers Notions, not simply passing our Capacity to know, we are not yet in Condition to know, by Reason of our Circumstances here, in this dark Corner of Things, to which we are confined, and wherein we lie under many Disadvantages of attaining Knowledge: He that is shut up in a close Place, and can only peep through Chinks, who standeth in a Valley, and hath his Prospect intercepted, who is encompassed with Fogs, who hath but a dusky Light to view Things by, whose Eyes are weak or foul, how can he see much or far, how can he discern Things remote, minute, or subtle, clearly and distinctly? Such is our Case; our Mind is pent up in the Body, and looketh only through those Clefts, by which Objects strike our Sense. Its Intuition is limited within a very small Compass; it resideth in an Atmosphere of Fancy, stuffed with Exhalations from Temper, Appetite, Passion, Interest; its Light is scant and faint (for Sense and Experience reach only some few gross Matters of Fact, Light infused, and Revelation imparted to us, proceed in Measures fixt by GOD) our Ratiocination consequently from such Principles must be very short and defective;

nor are our Minds ever thoroughly sound or pure and defecate from Prejudices ; hence no Wonder, that now we are wholly ignorant of divers great Truths, or have but a glimmering Notion of them, which we may, and hereafter shall come fully and clearly to understand : So that even Apostles, the Secretaries of Heaven, might say, *We know in Part, and we prophesy in Part ; We now see through a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face.*

IN fine, those Rules of Equity or Expedience, which we use in our Transactions with one another (being derived from our original Inclinations to like some good Things, or from Notions stamped on our Soul, when GOD made us according to his Image, from common Experience, from any Kind of rational Collection, from the Prescription of GOD's Word) if they be applied to the Dealings of GOD, will be found very incongruous, or deficient ; the Case being vastly altered from that infinite Distance in Nature and State between GOD and us ; and from the immense Differences which his Relations toward us have from our Relations to one another.

WHEREFORE in divers Enquiries about Providence, to which our Curiosity will stretch itself, it is impossible for us to be resolved, and launching into them we shall soon get out of our Depth, so as to swim in Dissatisfaction, or to sink into Distrust : Why GOD made the World at such an Instant, no sooner or later ; why He made it thus, not exempt from all Disorder ; why He framed Man (the Prince of visible Creatures) so fallible and frail, so prone to Sin, so liable to Misery ; why so many Things happen, offensive to Him ; why his Gifts are distributed with such Inequality ; such Questions we are apt to propound and to debate ;

bate; but the Resolution of them our Mind perhaps was not made to apprehend; however in this State we by no Means can come at it; it at least being kept among those Things, of which it is said, *Secret Things belong unto the LORD our GOD*, in Distinction from others, about which it is added, *But those that are revealed belong unto us, and to our Children for ever.*

IN such Cases the absolute Will, the sovereign Authority, the pure Liberality of GOD supply the Place of Reasons, sufficient, if not to satisfy the Minds of Men fondly curious, yet to stop the Mouths of those, who are boldly peremptory; which are alledged, not with the Intent to imply that GOD ever acteth unaccountably, or without highest Reason; but that sometimes his Methods of acting are not fit Subjects of our Conception or Discussion; for otherwhile GOD appealeth to the Verdict of our Reason; when the Case is such that we can apprehend it, and the Apprehension of it may conduce to good Purposes.

2. As the standing Rules of GOD's acting, so the occasional Grounds thereof are commonly placed beyond the Sphere of our Apprehension.

GOD is obliged to prosecute his own Decrees; *working all Things* (as the Apostle saith) *according to the Counsel of his own Will*; which how can we any-wise come to discover? Can we climb up above the Heaven of Heavens, and there unlock his Closet, rifle his Cabinet, and peruse the Records of everlasting Destiny, by which the World is governed? No; *Who knoweth his Mind, or hath been his Counsellor? Who* (saith the Prophet) *hath stood in the Counsel of the LORD; or hath perceived and heard his Word?*

He doth *search the Hearts, and try the Reins of Men*; He doth *weigh their Spirits, and their Works*; He doth *know their Frame, He doth understand their Thoughts afar off*; He perceiveth their closest Intentions, their deepest Contrivances, their most retired Behaviours; He consequently is acquainted with their true Qualifications, Capacities and Merits; unto which He most justly and wisely doth accomodate his Dealings with them; which therefore must often thwart the Opinions and Expectations of us, who are ignorant of those Particulars, and can only view the exterior Face or Semblance of Things: For (as *Samuel* said in the case of preferring *David* before his Brethren) *GOD seeth not as Man seeth; for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but GOD looketh on the Heart.*

GOD also hath a perfect Foresight of contingent Events; He seeth upon what Pin each Wheel moveth, and with what Weight every Scale will be turned: He discerneth all the Connexions, all the Entanglements of Things, and what the Result will be upon the Combination, or the Clashing of numberless Causes; in Correspondence to which Perceptions He doth order Things consistently, and conveniently; whereas we being stark blind, or very dim-sighted in such Respects (seeing nothing future, and but few Things present) cannot apprehend what is fit and feasible; or why that is done, which appeareth done to us.

GOD observeth in what Relations, and what Degrees of Comparison (as to their Natures their Virtues, their Consequences) all Things stand, each toward others; so poising them in the Balance of right Judgment, as exactly to distinguish their just Weight; whereas we cannot tell what Things

Things to compare, we know not how to put them into the Scale, we are unapt to make due Allowances, we are unable to discern which Side doth overweigh: In the immense Variety of Objects, our Knowledge extends to few Things eligible, nor among them can we pick out the best Competitors for our Choice: Hence often must we be at a great Loss in scanning the Designs, or tracing the Footsteps of Providence.

3 WE are also incapable throughly to discern the Ways of Providence from our moral Defects, from our Stupidity, our Sloth, our Temerity, our Impatience, our Impurity of Heart, our Perverseness of Will and Affections: We have not the Perspicacity to espy the subtile Tracts, and secret Reserves of Divine Wisdom; we have not the Industry, with steady Application of Mind, to regard and meditate on God's Works; we have not the Temper and Patience to wait upon God, until He discover Himself in the Accomplishment of his Purposes; we have not that *blessed Purity of Heart*, which is requisite to the *seeing* God in his special Dispensations; we have not that Rectitude of Will, and Government of our Passions, as not to be scandalized at what God doeth, if it thwarteth our Humour; such Defects are observable even in good Men; who therefore have misapprehended, have disrelished, have murmured at the Proceedings of God; we might instance in *Job*, in *David*, in *Elias*, in *Jonah*, in the holy Apostles themselves; by whose Speeches and Deportments in some Cases it may appear, how difficult it is for us, who have *Eyes of Flesh* (as *Job* speaketh) and Hearts too not quite freed of Carnality, to see through, or fully to acquiesce in the Dealings of God.

It

It is indeed a Distemper incident to us, which we can hardly shun, or cure, that we are apt to measure the Equity and Expedience of Things according to our Opinions and Passions; affecting consequently to impose on GOD our silly Imaginations as Rules of his Proceedings, and to constitute Him the Executioner of our sorry Passions; what we conceit fit to be done, that we take GOD bound to perform; when we feel ourselves stirred, then we presume GOD must be a-like concerned: To our Apprehensions, every slight Inconvenience is a huge Calamity, every Scratch of Fortune is a ghastly Wound; GOD therefore, we think, should have prevented it, or must presently remove it; every pitiful Bauble, every trivial Accomodation is a Matter of high Consequence, which if GOD withhold, we are ready to clamour on Him; and wail as Children for Want of a Trifle. Are we soundly angry? Then *Fire must come down from Heaven*, then Thunderbolts must fly about. Are we pleased? Then Showers of Blessings must descend on the Heads, Floods of Wealth run into the Laps of our Favourites; otherwise we are not satisfied; and scarce can deem GOD awake, or mindful of his Charge. We beyond Measure hate or despise some Persons, and to those GOD must not afford any Favour, any Mercy. We excessively admire or dote on others; and those GOD must not touch or cross; if He doth not proceed thus, He is in Danger to forfeit his Authority: He must hardly be allowed to govern the World, in case He will not square his Administrations to our fond Conceit, or froward Humour: Hence no Wonder, that Men often are stumbled about Providence; for GOD will not rule according to their Fancy or Pleasure; neither indeed could He do so, if He would, their

Judgments

Judgments and their Desires being infinite various, inconsistent and repugnant. Again,

4. The Nature of those Instruments, which Divine Providence doth use in Administration of human Affairs, hindreth us from discerning it: It is an Observation among *Philosophers*, that the Footsteps of Divine Wisdom are, to Exclusion of Doubt, far more conspicuous in the Works of Nature, than in the Management of our Affairs; so that some, who by Contemplation of natural Appearances were convinced of God's Existence, and his Protection of the World, reflecting on the Course of human Transactions, have staggered into Distrust, whether a Divine Wisdom doth sit at the Helm of our Affairs: Many hardly would admit God to be concerned in them, but supposed Him to commit their Conduct to a casual Fluctuation of obvious Causes: One great Reason of this Difference may be, that whereas the Instruments of Divine Power in Nature are in themselves merely passive, or act only as they are acted by pure Necessity (as a Pen in Writing, or a Hammer in Striking) being thence determinate, uniform, constant, and certain in their Operation; whenever any Footsteps of Counsel, any Tendency to an End, and Deviation from the common Tracts of Motion do appear, such Effects cannot reasonably be imputed merely to natural Causes, but to a Superior Wisdom, wielding them in such a Manner, and steering them to such a Mark: But the visible Engines of Providence in our Affairs are self-moving Agents, working with Knowledge and Choice; which, as in themselves they are indeterminate, irregular and uncertain, so they may be diversified in numberless unaccountable Ways, according to various Representations of Objects, or by Influence of divers Principles

ciples inclining to judge and chuse differently: Temper, Humour, Passion, Prejudice, Custom, Example, together with Contingencies of Occasion (depending on like Principles in adjacent free Causes) move, singly or combinedly, in Ways so implicate, to the Production of so various Events, that nothing hardly can fall out, which may not with some plausible Colour be derived from some one of those Sources, or from a Complication of them: Nothing can appear so uncouth or extravagant, which may not be fathered on some Fetch of Wit, or some Hit of Fancy, some Capricio of Humour, some Transport of Passion, some lucky Advantage, or on divers of those conspiring; whence in accounting for the Reason of such Events, Men deem they may leave out Providence, as superfluous; especially considering, that usually Disorders and Defects, only imputable to Man's Will, accompany and further such Events.

For Instance, what other Cause would many think needful to assign for the Conveyance of *Joseph* into *Egypt*, than the Envy of his Brethren; for *Shimei's* reviling *David*, than his base Malignity; for *David's* numbring the People, than his wanton Pride; for *Jeroboam's* Revolt, than his unruly Ambition; for *Job's* being robbed, than the theevish Disposition of the *Arabs*; for his being diseased, than a Redundance of bad Humours; for our LORD's suffering, than the spiteful Rage of the *Jewish* Rulers and People; together with the treacherous Avarice of *Judas*, and the corrupt Easiness of *Pilate*? Yet these Events, are all of them, ascribed to God's Hand, and special Ordination; but Men could not see, or avow it in them: What Need will Men ever say in such

such Cases to introduce GOD's Aid, when human Means suffice?

5. INDEED, as in Nature, the Influences of Heaven, and of inferior Causes, so commonly in the Production of these Events, divine and human Agency are so knit and twisted one with the other, that it is not easy to discriminate them, so as to sever the Bounds of common and special Providence; or to discern what God performeth by natural Instruments, what by superior Efficacy; when the Balance turneth on our Inclinations, when it is cast from a Grain thrown in by Divine Interposition: The Management of these Affairs being a Consort, wherein God's Wisdom beareth one Part, Man's Free-will playeth another; Occasion also Strikes in, we not seeing the first, are prone to ascribe all the Harmony to the last, which are most obvious.

6. THE more apt we are to do thus, because the Manner of Divine Efficacy is ever very soft and gentle: GOD disposeth Things *fortiter & suaviter*, so as to perform what He designeth, but in the most sweet and easy Way: His Providence doth not hurry along, like an impetuous Torrent; but glideth on as a smooth and still Current, with an irresistible, but imperceptible Force carrying Things down therewith; without any Clatter, by a Nod of his Head, by a Whisper of his Mouth, by a Turn of his Hand, He doth effect his Purposes; winding up a close Spring, He setteth the greatest Wheels in Motion, and thrusting in an insensible Spoke He stoppeth the greatest Wheels in their Career; injecting a Thought, exciting a Humour, presenting an Occasion, insinuating a petty Accident, He bringeth about the most notable Events. He doth so fashion the Hearts of Men, so manage their

their Hands, so guide their Steps, that even they who are acted by Him cannot feel the least Touch upon them. For *the King's Heart is in the Hand of the LORD, as the Rivers of Water he turneth it wheresoever he will*; that is, by secret Pipes, by obscure Channels, God conveyeth the Minds and Wills of the greatest Persons (the chief Engines of his Providence) unto such Points of Resolution as He pleaseth; so that they seem to flow thither of their own Accord, without any exterior Direction: Hence his most effectual Operations slip by us without making Impression on our Minds, which are wont to apprehend Things, as with a gross Palpability they incur the Senses; so that the Preacher, comparing the Methods of Providence with the most occult Proceedings in Nature, might well say, *As thou knowest not the Way of the Spirit, nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child, so thou knowest not the Works of GOD, who maketh all.* Again,

7. GOD in his Progress toward the Attainment of any Design, is not wont to go in the most direct and compendious Ways, but commonly windeth about, and taketh a large Compass, unfolding several other co-incident Purposes, some whereof may be no less considerable, than is that which we deem most necessary: But this Course seemeth tedious to us, who have not the Wit to perceive that Complication of Ends, nor the Temper to wait for the Completion of them. If GOD, when we seem to need, doth not instantly appear in our Favour; if He doth not presently vindicate Truth and Right; if He doth not nip wicked Designs in the Bud; if for a while He suffereth the *Tabernacles of Robbers to prosper, and Iniquity to lift up its Horns*; then He is in a Slumber, quite unmindful and insensible of us; then He turneth aside his Face,

Face, or doth behold what passeth as an unconcerned Spectator; then He standeth aloof, unready to help us; then doth He hold off his Hand, not meddling in our Affairs: In such Cases we are apt to cry out, *Estis ubi ô superi: How long, O LORD, wilt Thou forget? How long wilt Thou hide thy Face? LORD, how long wilt Thou look on? Awake, why sleepest Thou, O LORD? Why standest Thou afar off? Why withdrawest Thou thy Hand? Pluck it out of thy Bosom: Return, O LORD, how long?* Such are our Prayers, such our Expostulations; so is our blind Impatience prone to murmur; not considering how many good Designs GOD is carrying on in a calm and steady Pace, by well measured Steps, all which in due Season, when they are ripe for Accomplishment, shall undoubtedly be effected; for the LORD (as St. Peter saith) is not slack concerning his Promise, as some Men count Slackness, but is long-suffering toward all Men; that is, He certainly will express his faithful Benignity toward good Men, yet so as also to extend his merciful Patience toward others; He so will tender the Interests of some, as concurrently to procure the Welfare of all, and accordingly will time his Proceedings, allowing the Leisure and Opportunities requisite thereto: He can, although we cannot, wait to be gracious; for as in Him there are no Passions to precipitate Action, so to Him there are no sensible Differences of Time, *One Day being with the LORD as a thousand Years, and a thousand Years as one Day.*

8. AGAIN, GOD (as is the Property of every wise Agent) is wont to act variously, according to the State and Circumstances of Things, or to the Dispositions and Capacities of Persons; so as to do the same Thing for different Ends, and different Things for the same End; to apply one Instrument

to several Uses, and by several Instruments to work one Purpose: So He afflicteth good Men out of Love, for Trial and Improvement of their Virtues; bad Men in Displeasure, to illustrate his Power and Justice on them; He encourageth and blesteth the one, He punisheth and curseth the other with Prosperity; He reclaimeth both from Error and Sin by either of these Methods, as their Temper and their Circumstances require: Whence it is very difficult for us ever from the Kind of Accidents befalling Men to divine how far God is concerned in them, or to what particular Scope they are aimed; so that well might the Preacher, upon a careful Observation of such Occurrences, establish this Rule, *No Man knoweth Love, or Hatred* (that is, the special Regard of God toward Men) *by all that is before them; because all Things come alike to all, there is one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked.* Farther,

9. THERE are different Ends which Providence in various Order and Measure doth pursue, which we by Reason of our dim Sight and short Prospect cannot descry: GOD, as the universal and perpetual Governor of the World, in his Dispensation of Things, respecteth not only the Good of this or that Person, of one Nation, or one Age; but often (in some Degree waving that, or taking Care for it in a less remarkable Way) hath a provident Regard to the more extensive Good of a whole People, of the World, of Posterity; as He ordered his Friend *Abraham* to wander in a strange Land for the Benefit of his Seed; *Joseph* to be sold, calumniated, and fettered for the Preservation of his Family; our LORD to suffer those grievous Things for the Redemption of Mankind; the *Jews* to be rejected for the Salvation of the *Gentiles*: In such Cases purblind Men observing Events to cross particular

icular and present Ends, but not being aware how conducive they may prove to general, remote, and more important Designs, can hardly be satisfied how God should be concerned in them; the present, or that which lieth adjacent, is all that we can or will consider, and therefore must be ill Judges of what is done by all-provident Wisdom.

10. AGAIN, GOD permitteth Things bad in their own Nature, with Regard to their instrumental Use and Tendency; for often the worst Things may be ordinarable to the best Ends; Things very bitter may work pleasant Effects; upon the wildest Stock Divine Husbandry can ingraft excellent Fruit: Sin really, and Suffering reputedly are the worst Evils, yet even from them much Glory to GOD, and great Benefit to Men may accrue. Even from the most wicked Act that ever was committed, from the most lamentable Event that ever happened, Fruits admirably glorious, and immensely beneficial sprung; yet usually so blind are we as to be offended at such Things, and from them to raise Exceptions against Providence.

11. ALSO the Expediency of Things to be permitted or crossed, doth frequently consist not in themselves singly taken, as particular Acts or Events, but in their Reference to others, with which they may become subservient toward a common End; so that divers Things, in themselves extremely bad, may by Combination or Collision engender good Effects; and thence prove fit Weapons or Tools of Providence; as the most deadly Poisons may be so mixed, that curbing one anothers Force they may constitute an harmless Mass, sometimes a wholesome Medicine: But we, poring on the simple Ingredients, and not considering how they may be tempered, or how applied by a skilful Hand,

can hardly deem the Toleration of them congruous to Wisdom. Farther,

12. THAT Providence sometimes is obscure and intricate, may be attributed to the Will of God, upon divers good Accounts designing it to be such: *Verily (saith the Prophet) Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God, of Israel the Saviour.*

God commonly doth not intend to exert his Hand notoriously; for that whereas every special Interposition of his Hand is in Effect a Miracle, (surmounting the natural Power, or thwarting the ordinary Course of inferior Causes) it doth not become Him to prostitute his miraculous Power, or to exert it otherwise than upon singular Occasions, and for most weighty Causes: It is not conformable to the Tenor of his Administrations to convince Men against their Will, or by irresistible Evidence to wring Persuasion from stubborn and stupid Minds; but to exercise the Wisdom, and to prove the Ingenuity of well-disposed Persons, who upon competent Intimations, shall be capable to spell out, and forward to approve his Proceedings.

13. HE will not glare forth in Discoveries so bright as to dazzle, to confound our weak Sight; therefore he veileth his Face with a Cloud, and wrappeth his Power in some Obscurity; therefore *Clouds and Darknes are round about Him; He maketh Darknes his secret Place; His Pavilion round about Him is dark Waters and thick Clouds of the Sky.*

14. HE meaneth thereby to exalt and improve our Faith, being the less seen, that He may be the more believed; Faith never rising higher, than when it doth soar to Objects beyond our Sight; when

when we can approve GOD's Wisdom and Justice in Occurrences surmounting our Conceit; when we can rely upon GOD's Word and Help, although the Stream of his Proceedings seemeth to cross our Hopes.

15. IT is fit also, that GOD should act many Times designedly in Ways surpassing our Apprehension, and apt to baffle or puzzle our Reason, that He may appear GOD indeed, infinitely transcending us in Perfection of Wisdom and Justice; or that we comprehending the Reason of his Actings, may not imagine our Wisdom comparable, our Justice commensurate to His; yea that we in those Respects exceed him; for "That (as *Tertullian* discourseth) which may be seen, is less than the Eyes that survey it; that which may be comprehended, is less than the Hands that grasp it; that which may be valued, is less than the Senses which rate it." It is GOD's being inestimable that makes him worthily esteemed; his being incomprehensible, rendereth Him adorable.

16. THE Obscurity of Providence doth indeed conciliate an awful Reverence toward it; for Darknes naturally raiseth a Dread of invisible Powers; we use to go on tremblingly, when we cannot see far about us; we regard none so much as those, whose Wisdom we find to over-reach ours, and whose Intentions we cannot sound: It was *Elibu's* Observation, *With GOD is terrible Majesty, the Almighty we cannot find Him out; — Men do therefore fear Him.*

17. IT is also requisite, that GOD should dispose many Occurrences, cross to our vulgar Notions, and offensive to our carnal Sense, that we may thence be prompted to think of GOD, driven to

seek Him, engaged to mark Him interposing in our Affairs: Men from disorderly and surprising Accidents preposterously conceive Doubts about Providence, as if it managing Things, Nothing odd or amiss would occur; whereas if no such Events did start up, they might be proner to question it, they would at least come to forget or neglect it; for if human Transactions passed on as do the Motions of Nature, in a smooth Course, without any Rub or Disturbance, Men commonly would no more think of GOD, than they do when they behold the Sun rising, the Rivers running, the Sea flowing; they would not depend on his Protection, or have Recourse to Him for Succour: It is Difficulty and Distress seizing them, which compel Men to implore GOD for Relief, which dispose them to see his Hand reaching it forth unto them; according to that in the Psalmist, *When He slew them, then they sought Him; they returned and inquired early after GOD; they remembered that GOD was their Rock, and the Most High GOD their Redeemer.* — Again,

18. IT is needful that the present Course of Providence should not be transparently clear and satisfactory, that we may be well assured concerning a future Account, and forced in our Thoughts to recur thither for a Resolution of all such emergent Doubts and Difficulties; for if all Accounts were apparently stated and discharged here; if now Right did ever prevail, and Iniquity were suppressed; if Virtue were duly crowned, and Vice deservedly scourged, who would hope or fear an After-Reckoning?

THIS indeed is the grand Cause why Providence now doth appear so cloudy. Men consider not that our Affairs have no compleat Determination,

or

or final Issue here: Things now are doing and not done, in a Progress and Tendency toward somewhat beyond, not in a State of Consistence and Perfection; this not being the Place of deciding Causes, or dispensing Rewards; but a State of Probation, of Work, of Travel, of Combat, of running for the Prize, of sowing toward the Harvest; a State of Liberty to follow our own Choice, and to lay the Ground of our Doom; of falling into Sin, and of rising thence by Repentance; of GOD's exercising Patience, and exhibiting Mercy: Wherefore as we cannot well judge of an artificial Work by its first Draughts, or of a Poem by a few Scenes, but must stay 'till all be finished or acted through; so we cannot here clearly discern the entire Congruity of providential Dispensations to the Divine Attributes; the Catastrophe or utmost Resolution of Things is the general Judgment, wherein the deep Wisdom, the exact Justice, the perfect Goodness of GOD will be displayed to the full Satisfaction or Conviction of all Men; when GOD's Honour will be thoroughly vindicated, his despised Patience and abused Grace will be avenged; every Case will be rightly tried, every Work will be justly recompenced, all Accounts will be set straight; in the mean Time divers Things must occur unaccountable to us, looking upon Things as they now stand absolutely before us, without Reference to that Day: Considering this may induce us to suspend our Opinion about such Matters, allowing GOD to go through with his Work before we censure it, not being so quick and precipitate as to forestall his Judgment; and surely would we but observe that reasonable Advice of *St. Paul, Judge Nothing before the Time, untill the LORD come*, our chief Doubts would be resolved, our shrewdest Exceptions against Providence would be voided.

THESE

THESE are the chief Reasons of the Point: Divers practical Applications may be made; which the Time will but allow me to name.

1. It should render us modest and sober in our Judgment about providential Occurrences, not pretending thoroughly to know the Reasons of God's Proceedings, or to define the Consequences of them; for it is plainly fond Arrogance or profane Imposture to assume perfect Skill in that which passeth our Capacity to learn.
2. It should make us stanch, and cautious of grounding Judgment or Censure upon present Events about any Cause, or any Person; for it is notorious Temerity to pass Sentence upon Grounds incapable of Evidence.
3. It should repress wanton Curiosity, which may transport us beyond our Bounds, in Speculation of these Mysteries; so that we shall lose our Labour and Time, shall discompose our Minds, shall plunge ourselves into vain Errors, or anxious Doubts.
4. It should keep us from Confidence in our own Wisdom; for how can we conceit highly of that, or much confide in it, which we find so unable to penetrate the Reason of most common and obvious Appearances; so *non-plust* in its Inquiries, so defeated in its Expectations, so mistaken in its Judgments of Things?
5. It should preserve us from Infidelity, and from Despair upon Account of any cross Accidents occurring here; for it is unreasonable to disbelieve a Notion, otherwise well grounded, because we cannot answer Scruples or Cavils drawn from Matters

ters inscrutable to us ; it is foolish to despair of a good Event, upon Appearances, whereof we cannot apprehend the full Reason, or final Result.

6. IT should prevent our taking Offence, or being discontented at any Events rising up before us ; for to be displeased at that, which a superior Wisdom, unsearchable to us, doth order, is to be displeased at we know not what, or why, which is childish Weakness ; to fret and wail at that, which for all we can see, proceedeth from good Intention, and tendeth to good Issue.

7. IT should guard us from Security, or from presuming upon Impunity for our Miscarriages ; for seeing God doth not always clearly and fully discover his Mind, it is vain from God's Reservedness to conclude his Unconcernedness ; or because He is now patient, that He never will be just in chastising our Offences.

8. IT should quicken our Industry in observing and considering the Works of Providence ; for since they are not easily discernible, and the discerning them in some Measure is of great Use, it is needful that we be very diligent in Contemplation of them ; the fainter our Light is, the more intent we should be in Looking ; the knottier the Subject, the more earnest should be our Study on it.

9. IT should oblige us to be circumspect and wary in our Conversation ; for the darker the Way is, the more careful should be our Walking therein, lest we err, lest we stumble, lest we strike on somewhat hurtful to us.

10. IT should engage us constantly to seek God, and to depend on Him, for the Protection and Conduct

Conduct of his Grace, which is the only Clew that can lead us safely through this intricate Labyrinth of worldly Contingencies.

11. IN fine, it should cause us humbly to admire and adore that Wisdom, which governeth the World in Ways no less great and wonderful, than just and holy: For *great and marvellous are thy Works, O LORD GOD Almighty: Just and true are thy Ways, O thou King of Saints.*

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise GOD be Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

End of the Thirty-fifth VOLUME.

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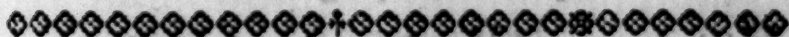




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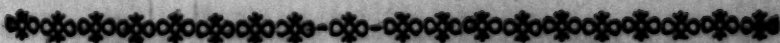
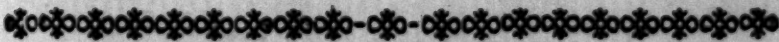
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